

# CHESNEY PARK

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T o p e k a , K a n s a s



## Neighborhood Plan

An Element of the

**Topeka Comprehensive Plan 2025**

A Cooperative Effort By:

*The*

*Chesney Park Neighborhood Improvement Association*

*&*

*Topeka Planning Department*

ADOPTED:

Topeka Planning Commission, June 15th, 2009

Topeka Governing Body, July 7th, 2009



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# I. INTRODUCTION & PURPOSE

## Background

In August, 1996, the Chesney Park Neighborhood Improvement Association (NIA), through the Central Topeka TurnAround Team, submitted a request to the Topeka-Shawnee Metropolitan County Planning Commission for the down-zoning of their neighborhood to a predominantly single-family residential classification. As a result, the Chesney Park Neighborhood Land Use Plan was developed by community stakeholders in collaboration with the Metropolitan Planning Department and presented to the Planning Commission as an element of the region's Comprehensive Plan. The Plan was adopted as such in July, 1998 by the Shawnee County and City of Topeka governing bodies. Re-zoning of the neighborhood was approved by the same bodies which implemented the Plan. The Plan is intended to be a comprehensive, cohesive and coordinated approach to neighborhood planning that is regularly reviewed as needed and formally updated every five to ten years.

In 2005, the Chesney Action Team (CAT) was formed by residents and property owners in the area to qualify and apply for Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds administered by the City of Topeka to use for revitalization activities in low-income, distressed areas of the city. In early 2006, the Topeka City Council approved the Chesney Park neighborhood to be one of two designated target neighborhoods for planning assistance in 2006, and to receive significant funding to implement that plan in the years 2007 and 2008. Targeting efforts for this period included housing and infrastructure repair along SW Central Park Avenue from SW 17<sup>th</sup> to 21<sup>st</sup> Street, as well as infrastructure repair along SW Lane Street from SW 17<sup>th</sup> to 21<sup>st</sup> Street. Sidewalk improvements have also occurred along blocks leading to the Park since the original Plan creation date in 1998.

In February of 2009, the Topeka City Council once again approved the Chesney Park neighborhood to be one of two designated target neighborhoods for planning assistance in 2009, and to receive significant funding to implement that plan in 2010 and 2011.

## Purpose

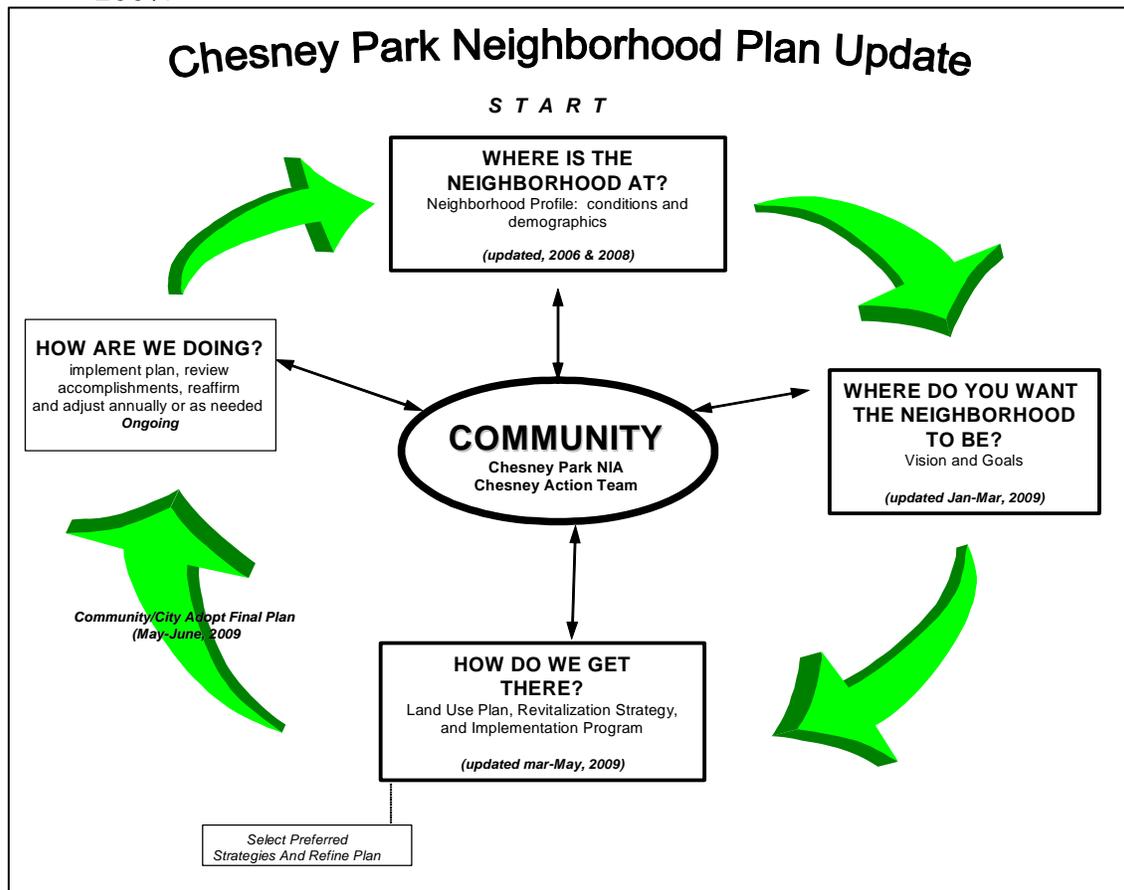
The purpose of this document is twofold: (1) to update the existing conditions of the neighborhood and to analyze trends that occurred within the area between the previous plan creation date in 1998, and (2) to provide long-range guidance and clear direction to the City, its agencies, residents, and private/public interests for the future revitalization of the Chesney Park neighborhood. This document was prepared in collaboration with the Chesney Park NIA and the Topeka Planning Department. It establishes a 10 year vision and appropriate policies for land use, housing, community character, community facilities and circulation for the neighborhood.

It is impractical, however, to expect all recommendations of this plan to be implemented in a timely manner, if at all. Recommendations for infrastructure, housing and parks all involve major City expenditures that are constrained by the amount of tax revenues the City collects. Other NIA's compete for such allocations as well. Reliance on non-City funding sources will also determine the pace of implementation. Thus, another purpose of this plan is to provide guidance for priorities in order to determine the most prudent expenditures with limited resources.

## Process

This document has primarily been prepared in collaboration with the Chesney Park NIA, with input from residents and other stakeholders in the neighborhood as well. The NIA and Chesney Action Team also devoted many of their weekly meetings in 2009 in order to formulate the goals, guiding principles, strategies and actions recommended in the Plan.

Beginning in the fall of 2006, and with another update in the winter of 2008, planning staff conducted a property-by-property land use/housing survey of the neighborhood and collected pertinent demographic data. The information was shared and presented during a community workshop at the Central Park Community Center on March 12<sup>th</sup>, 2009. A draft of the final plan was also presented to the community at a confirmation/wrap-up meeting held on May 14<sup>th</sup>, 2009.



## II. NEIGHBORHOOD PROFILE

### A. LOCATION AND CHARACTER

The Chesney Park neighborhood is located in the central area of the City of Topeka, Kansas approximately 2.0 miles southwest from the Capitol building and the Central Business District. The neighborhood is approximately 164 acres in total area and is bounded by SW 17<sup>th</sup> Street to the north, SW 21<sup>st</sup> Street to the south, SW Washburn Avenue to the west, and SW Western Avenue to the east. The Plan area also includes the 68-acre Kansas Expocentre grounds east of Western Avenue.

Two prominent institutional uses - Washburn University and the Kansas Expocentre – anchor the western and eastern flanks of the neighborhood, respectively. Heavily traveled arterial streets – SW 17<sup>th</sup> Street and 21<sup>st</sup> Street - bound the neighborhood to the north and south. The area to the north is similar in residential character and includes medium-scale commercial retail district. The area to the south is heavily commercialized. Geographically, the area has a slightly declining elevation from the outer perimeter regions of the neighborhood towards the park.

“Chesney Park”, the park from which the neighborhood derives its name, is the second oldest park in Topeka. It was purchased by the City in 1875 outside of the city limits and was not developed until there was a community for it to serve. The Martin & Dennis Subdivision was platted in 1887 and is characterized by 25' X 143' lots and 66' right-of-ways. The City annexed the neighborhood two years later. Houses shortly developed around the park, but the park itself was overshadowed by the more prestigious Central Park to the north. Chesney Park was known for its dedication to the play of children, picnic lunches, and bandstand concerts. In 1916, Governor Capper donated a wading pool for the children of the neighborhood, which had created a “government” and elected officers for their park.

By this time, the neighborhood had developed mostly for residences with only a few commercial businesses along SW 17<sup>th</sup> Street (e.g., filling stations). Most of the residences within Chesney Park reflect various styles of architecture popular in the early 20<sup>th</sup> Century ranging from bungalow, homestead, and four-square styles with Victorian and Arts and Crafts influences. Several brick sidewalks and streets still remain. Its growth was limited to the east and west by the Mid-America Fairgrounds and the Washburn University campus which both developed before the turn of the century. While larger, more stately homes began to spring up on the western fringes of the neighborhood closest to the University, residences in the eastern half generally took on a more modest character near the Fairgrounds. The area was prone to a high number of substandard dwellings as indicated in a survey for the city's 1942 Comprehensive Plan due to its proximity to the Fairgrounds and industrial uses along SW Western Avenue. Animal barns and racetracks are some of the uses on the Fairgrounds site that relegated this portion

of the neighborhood to deleterious impacts. Many homes in this area have since been razed either to make way for parking, business, or because of their dilapidated condition.

New residential development within the neighborhood in the last 10 years has been non-existent, with the exception of the 28-unit apartment complex at the corner of SW 19<sup>th</sup> Street and Washburn Avenue built in 1998. The Fairgrounds site has been completely transformed into the modern Kansas Expocentre which includes an arena, convention hall, conference center, hotel, agricultural hall, and livestock pavilions. The stark corrugated exterior of the 1½ block-long livestock pavilions and blank 12' concrete walls of a former water reservoir loom over the eastern edge of the neighborhood and are reminders of past architectural/land use incompatibilities.

The austerity of the area has been transformed by the creation of the *Great Mural Wall of Topeka* upon the concrete walls of the former water reservoir. When completed, it will be one of the longest murals in the United States. Through generous donations from neighborhood residents, businesses, the City, as well as grants written and received by the NIA, there are now 180 feet of mural panels on the 900 foot wall that depicts the history of the Midway Fairgrounds upon which the Kansas Expocentre now resides, as well as the history of several Central Topeka neighborhoods.



*Great Mural Wall located at SW 20<sup>th</sup> Street & Western Avenue. The project celebrates the history of Central Topeka as well as the Midway Fairgrounds, which is now the current site of the Kansas Expocentre and livestock pavilion.*

## B. EXISTING CONDITIONS

### Health

The Neighborhood Element of the Comprehensive Plan establishes a health rating for all neighborhoods in Topeka in order to prioritize planning assistance and resource allocation. The health ratings are based upon the existing conditions of the neighborhood such as property values, crimes per capita, homeownership levels, presence of boarded homes, as well as the percentage of residents living below the poverty level. According to the 2007 Neighborhood Element, the entire Chesney Park neighborhood is designated as *Intensive Care*, which represents the most severely distressed conditions. In 1998, only the blocks located north of SW 19<sup>th</sup> Street were classified as *Intensive Care*, while the remaining southern portions of Chesney Park were designated as *At Risk*. Many of the key indicators of neighborhood health such as crimes per capita and percentage of residents living below poverty, therefore, have worsened within the Chesney Park neighborhood over the past decade.

### Land Use

For purposes of the following statistical and demographic information, Chesney Park refers to the 164-acre neighborhood as defined herein: SW 17<sup>th</sup> Street to the north, SW 21<sup>st</sup> Street to the south, SW Washburn Avenue to the west, and SW Western Avenue to the east. The Kansas Expocentre site between SW Western Avenue and Topeka Boulevard is included in the Maps for illustrative purposes and context only.

Single-family residential is the predominant land use in the neighborhood and comprises nearly 75% of all parcels and 63% of the land area, as shown in Table #1. The remaining properties and land area are dedicated to higher density residential usage in the form of two-family and multi-family structures with a high percentage of vacant lots (10%). There does not appear to be any distinct two-family or multi-family districts with the exception of portions of SW Washburn Avenue. Chesney Park also maintains several prominent institutional land-uses ranging from the City's Water Distribution Facility to an assisted living facility on SW Fillmore Street. Map #1 illustrates the existing land uses by parcel.

Land uses in the neighborhood, furthermore, have changed since a survey of the area was last conducted in 1998. Single-family residential uses decreased slightly mainly due to demolitions (-2.8%). The number of converted multi-family dwellings (single-family homes that have been converted into three or more apartments) decreased from around 17 houses in 1998 to only four houses in 2009. This reduction can be attributed to the demolition of substandard houses, as well as conversions back to either single-family or two-family converted dwellings. Commercial uses increased due in part to the relocation of the Sonic restaurant along SW 21<sup>st</sup> Street and Western Avenue, as well as the construction of a car-wash located two blocks away on SW 21<sup>st</sup> Street and SW Central Park Avenue.

The 3.7-acre "Chesney Park" is the only recreational open space found in the area and is a major focal point for the neighborhood. Most of the commercial and

office uses are located along the SW 17<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> Street corridors away from the neighborhood’s interior. Light industrial uses exist on the eastern perimeter of the neighborhood across from the Expocentre. Land uses are quite diverse in the Chesney Park neighborhood, which gives it a somewhat inconsistent image on its edges.

**Table 1  
Existing Land Uses – Chesney Park**

Land Use Category	Parcels 2009	Parcels 1998	% Change 1998-'09	% Total 2009	Acres 2009	% Total 2009
Residential - Single-Family	410	422	-2.8%	73.9%	68.4	63.0%
Residential - Two-Family	24	22	9.1%	4.3%	4.7	4.3%
Residential - Two-Family (c)	21	16	31.3%	3.8%	3.9	3.6%
Residential - Multi-Family	4	2	100.0%	0.7%	2.5	2.3%
Residential - Multi-Family (c)	4	17	-76.5%	0.7%	0.9	0.8%
Commercial - Retail/Service	11	9	22.2%	2.0%	2.9	2.7%
Office	6	5	20.0%	1.1%	3.3	3.0%
Institutional	7	7	0.0%	1.3%	3.9	3.6%
Industrial	4	5	-20.0%	0.7%	3.0	2.8%
Automobile Parking (Open)	3	2	50.0%	0.5%	0.5	0.5%
Open Space	1	1	0.0%	0.2%	3.4	3.1%
Vacant	60	53	13.2%	10.8%	11.1	10.2%
<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>555</b>	<b>561</b>	<b>-1.1%</b>		<b>108.5</b>	<b>100.0%</b>
<b>Public ROW</b>					<b>55.7</b>	
<b>Total Area</b>					<b>164.2</b>	

Source: Topeka Planning Dept. (Jan., 2009).

\* Several corrections were made to the Land Use Table of 1998.

## **Zoning**

In 1998, many blocks within Chesney Park were rezoned from the “M-1” or “M-2” two-family designations to the lower intensity “R-1” single-family designation. This is a reversal of previous trends over the past 50 years in which a number of high intensity deviations from the original single-family and two-family classifications occurred within the neighborhood. The variations in existing zoning patterns, including residential, commercial, industrial, and office, as illustrated in Map #2, can be traced to many of these high intensity rezoning cases that eroded the low-density residential edges of the neighborhood. The interior of the neighborhood, however, remains zoned for low-density single-family residential use.

## **Housing Density**

In terms of housing density, nearly 7 out of 10 housing units in Chesney Park are single-family. The overall density level of the neighborhood, which is 3.7 units/acre, essentially remained the same from 1998 to 2009 even with the addition of the Washburn Place apartment complex (refer to Table #2). The overall density level could have been higher if it were not for the considerable number of demolitions and resulting vacant lots, as well as the presence of large non-residential users. Single-family densities are deemed to be in a desired range.

**Table 2  
Housing Density – Chesney Park**

<b>Housing Type</b>	<b>Units 2009</b>	<b>Units 1998</b>	<b>% Change 1998-'09</b>	<b>% Total 2009</b>	<b>Total Acres 2009</b>	<b>Units/Acre 2009</b>
Single-Family	410	422	-2.8%	67.1%	67.8	6.0
Two-Family	90	76	18.4%	14.7%	8.4	10.7
Multi-Family	111	101	9.9%	18.2%	3.4	32.6
<b>SUBTOTAL</b>	<b>611</b>	<b>599</b>	<b>2.0%</b>		<b>79.6</b>	<b>7.7</b>
<b>TOTAL AREA W/ R-O-W</b>					<b>164.2</b>	<b>3.7</b>

Source: Topeka Planning Dept. (Jan., 2009)  
\* Several corrections were made to the Housing Density Table of 1998.

### **Housing Conditions**

The neighborhood housing conditions as surveyed by the Planning Department in January, 2009 exhibit a below-average overall rating since more than 6 out of 10 buildings/properties were assessed to have *Intermediate* or *Major* exterior deficiencies, as seen in Table #3 (housing conditions and ratings are defined in the Appendix). Single-family and two-family properties (including converted units) account for a large portion of the overall deterioration as nearly one-third of each of these dwelling types display *Major* deficiencies.

Comparing the *Housing Conditions* tables from 1998 and 2009, it shows that the number of homes with *Major* deficiencies declined (from 32.8% to 29.3%), as well as did the number of homes with only *Minor* deficiencies (from 38.1% to 36.8%). The number of homes with *Intermediate* deficiencies, however, increased rather significantly during this period (from 29.1% to 34%). This is not a good sign as it shows that housing units that were recently in good condition are now exhibiting deterioration due to deferred maintenance, and it is most likely that the reduction in the number of homes with *Major* deficiencies was due to the demolition of substandard structures. So in addition to the lack of new housing being built in the neighborhood, homes that were once in satisfactory condition are now showing signs of neglect.

While overall housing conditions in the neighborhood are not satisfactory, conditions have generally remained stable since a survey of the area was last conducted by the Planning Department in 1998. The quality of the housing stock within Chesney Park greatly improved within certain blocks of the neighborhood, but also deteriorated badly within other blocks during this period. For example, the targeting efforts along SW Central Park Avenue appear to have been successful as three out of the five blocks along this street displayed improved housing conditions, while the other two blocks remained stable. However, there was a notable decline in housing conditions in the 1900-2000 blocks of SW Clay Street, just one street west of SW Central Park Avenue (reference Map #3).

Housing conditions are much better in the western half of the neighborhood (SW Washburn Avenue to Buchanan Street) as nearly 80% of the blocks in this area are either *Sound* or show only *Minor Deterioration*, while only 35% in the eastern portion of the neighborhood are in the same condition (reference Map #3). The

western half of Chesney Park experiences less intrusion of non-residential land uses along the edges and thus tends to have more stable single-family housing conditions. This is exemplified by Chesney Park's southwest quadrant that has the largest and only concentration of blocks with *Sound* housing conditions.

Single-family blocks averaging *Major* deterioration tend to have more non-residential encroachment, which is certainly the case in the northeast and southeast quadrants of the neighborhood that have more industrial, commercial, and institutional and office land uses. The most deteriorated blocks are located on SW Clay Street north of SW 21<sup>st</sup> Street and Fillmore Street adjacent to industrial uses. (NOTE: Average block conditions are relative to the neighborhood and should not be compared to similar surveys in other neighborhoods)

**Table 3**  
**Housing Conditions – Chesney Park**

Housing Type	Minor Deficiencies		Intermediate Deficiencies		Major Deficiencies		Total
	# Properties	%	# Properties	%	# Properties	%	# Properties
Single-Family	151	36.8%	139	33.9%	120	29.3%	410
Two-Family	16	35.6%	15	33.3%	14	31.1%	45
Multi-Family	4	50.0%	4	50.0%	0	0.0%	8
<b>Total</b>	<b>171</b>	<b>36.9%</b>	<b>158</b>	<b>34.1%</b>	<b>134</b>	<b>28.9%</b>	<b>463</b>

Source: Topeka Planning Department (Jan., 2009)

## Tenure

The Chesney Park neighborhood has a low homeowner-occupancy rate as only a little over one-third (34.6%) of all dwelling units are owner-occupied. This figure is only a very slight increase from 1998, which was 33.8% owner-occupied. However, this slight increase is rather significant considering the addition of the 28-unit Washburn Place apartment complex after the Plan was completed in 1998. This is due to the loss of many rental units during this time and the slight increase of single-family homeownership levels from 47.8% in 1998 to 49.8% in 2009.

When comparing the level of owner-occupancy in the neighborhood by block for the years 1998 and 2009, it appears that the percentage of owner-occupied units increased in several areas, most notably the 1700 blocks of SW Lane Street to Fillmore Street (reference [Map #4](#)). The 1800-1900 blocks from SW Lane Street to Buchanan Street also experienced a growth in the owner-occupancy rate as well. This follows national and regional trends of growing homeownership rates. The areas with the lowest owner-occupancy levels can be found primarily along the edges of the neighborhood adjacent to high intensity residential, commercial and industrial development. The largest concentrations of owner-occupied dwellings are located in the interior of the neighborhood where 12 out of the 15 interior blocks had a 40% homeownership rate or higher.

**Table 4  
Housing Tenure – Chesney Park**

Housing Types	Owner-Occupied		Renter-Occupied		Vacant		Total
	Units	%	Units	%	Units	%	Units
Single-Family	204	49.8%	183	44.6%	23	5.6%	410
Two-Family	9	10.0%	69	76.7%	12	13.3%	90
Multi-Family	0	0.0%	100	90.1%	11	10%*	111
<b>Total</b>	<b>213</b>	<b>34.9%</b>	<b>352</b>	<b>57.6%</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>7.7%</b>	<b>611</b>

*Source: Topeka Planning Department (Jan., 2009) \*estimate*

### Property Values

Property value for residential land has increased over the past decade within Chesney Park. Based on data collected from the Shawnee County Appraisers Office, the average appraised values for single and two-family structures increased by 19% and 57% respectively from 1998 to 2008, as illustrated in [Table #5](#). No other comparisons were made due to lack of data, as well as the inclusion of the Washburn Place Apartments and Rose Villa assisted living facility in the multi-family category.

**Table 5  
Mean Property Values – Chesney Park**

Use	2008	1997*	% Change 1997-2008
Residential - Single-Family *	\$39,625	\$33,780	17%
Residential - Two-Family *	\$60,083	\$38,700	55%
Residential - Two-Family (c)	\$34,867	N/A	N/A
Residential - Multi-Family	\$538,575	\$39,740	N/A
Residential - Multi-Family (c)	\$58,907	N/A	N/A
Land Value/Acre	\$27,488	N/A	N/A

*Source: Shawnee County Appraiser (Jan., 2009)*

*\* In 2008 dollars*

### Public Safety

Crime statistics collected from the Topeka Police Department for the years 2007-'08 show that reported major crimes were fairly well dispersed throughout the neighborhood (reference [Map #5](#)). The highest concentrations of reported crimes during this period were located along the 1700 blocks of the neighborhood, as well as near areas of high-density residential development such as the intersection of SW 19<sup>th</sup> Street and Washburn Avenue. The 1700-1900 blocks of SW Clay Street, as well as the 2000 block of SW Lincoln Street, were also particularly unsafe. Major crimes are defined as Part I crimes.

## **Development Activity**

Most of the development activity that occurred in the neighborhood between 1997 and 2009 was limited to demolitions of single-family homes and other accessory structures such as garages. In fact, 19 of the 22 building permits issued during this period were demolitions (Map #6). The building permits tracked are for new construction or whole demolitions and do not include rehabilitations or additions.

There were, however, several projects built that have impacted the neighborhood significantly, such as the Washburn Place apartment complex located at SW 19<sup>th</sup> Street and Washburn Avenue, the carwash located at SW 21<sup>st</sup> Street and Central Park Avenue, as well as the Capital Plaza Hotel on the Kansas Expocentre grounds. The Shawnee County Noxious Weed department building was also built on a formerly vacant tract of land near the Kansas Expocentre in early 1997. According to the 2000 Census, 45% of all housing units were built before 1939. The older and larger houses of the neighborhood generally lend themselves to a higher state of maintenance, but also contribute to the unique historical character of the neighborhood.

## **Circulation**

Traffic and pedestrian circulation within Chesney Park is defined by a street grid system that is adequate to meet the needs of the residential neighborhood. All streets within the neighborhood are considered local streets (two-way) that serve as the principal access to homes. Because of the Expocentre grounds and the Washburn campus, all east-west local streets terminate at the edge of the neighborhood with north-south local streets being utilized more. There are several “blind” intersections in the neighborhood with no stop sign or yield sign for either street. The streets and intersections directly adjacent to the park were studied and determined not to warrant any further traffic controls than already exist. SW Western Avenue is identified as a collector on the neighborhood’s western boundary, but is primarily used by local businesses along the corridor and during Expocentre events. Most alleys are 16’ wide.

**Table 6**  
**Street Classification and Annual Average Daily Traffic – Chesney Park**

<b>Street</b>	<b>Classification</b>	<b>AADT</b>	<b>Entering Intersection</b>	<b>Accidents</b>
SW 21 <sup>st</sup> Street	Principal Arterial	19,190	Washburn	12
SW Washburn Avenue	Principal Arterial	18,330	21 <sup>st</sup>	12
SW Washburn Avenue	Principal Arterial	18,060	17 <sup>th</sup>	9
SW 17 <sup>th</sup> Street	Minor Arterial	10,920	Washburn	9

*Source: Topeka City Engineer*  
*\*AADT from 2004; Accidents from 2007*

Public transportation exists along three different bus routes along the neighborhood’s arterials and does not bisect the interior of the neighborhood. Those include Route #6 (West 17<sup>th</sup> St), Route #10 (West 21<sup>st</sup> St) along SW Washburn Avenue, and Route #12 (White Lakes) along SW 21<sup>st</sup> Street.

## **Public Facilities**

Within the neighborhood boundaries, two public facilities exist: the 3.4-acre park known as Chesney Park, and the City of Topeka's Water Distribution Facility in the 1900 block of SW Western Avenue/Fillmore Street. The park is a major focal point located in the center of the community and provides the neighborhood's only recreational open space. It is important to note that the Chesney Park neighborhood has no school or community center, and has only one church that ministers to Topeka's Hispanic community.

The 3.5-acre Water Distribution Facility site includes a 10 million gallon in-ground reservoir built in the 1930s, administrative offices for 70 field operations employees, a pump station, a warehouse, customer payment location, and associated parking. The pump station on-site is served by a 24" water main that is located underneath the right-of-way of SW Western Avenue. The pump station enables water flow to be directed into east Topeka. The City invested to implode, fill, and improve the reservoir area on the south half of the block to accommodate employee parking and relocation of their storage yard (SW 19<sup>th</sup> St and Western Ave) which stores trucks, machinery, and materials used for water main installation/repair. A 12' exterior block wall, which camouflaged the reservoir from the street, remains standing and is the site of a new mural.

While not located directly within the boundaries of the residential neighborhood, there are several public facilities adjacent to Chesney Park that have a major impact upon the neighborhood. To the east sits the Kansas Expocentre which includes the 123,000 square foot Landon Arena and Exhibition Hall. Other improvements on site include the Maner Conference Center, Livestock Arena and Stalls, Heritage Hall, Agricultural Hall, Capitol Plaza Hotel, and former Fire Station No. 5, new Fire Station No. 5, and the County's Noxious Weeds Department building. This prominent civic and cultural complex attracts numerous events, conventions, and exhibits throughout the year along with hundreds of thousands of visitors. Currently, the site accommodates approximately 2,500 paved parking spaces. Parking has become a premium particularly when multiple events are being staged. The new hotel has displaced overflow parking spaces, while many livestock events still overflow onto SW Western Avenue, side streets, and vacant lots. With the exception of additional parking demands, particularly along the 1700 block of SW Western Avenue, the acquisition of property for Expocentre facilities is not anticipated to occur in the near future.

Fire Station No. 5, at the corner of SW 21<sup>st</sup> Street and Western Avenue, is known to be the city's busiest fire station in terms of number calls. SW Western Avenue is currently used for their emergency vehicle route and does not impact residential streets.

On Chesney Park's western edge, the 160-acre Washburn University campus is located across SW Washburn Avenue. The University's population of approximately 7,300 students is comprised of many non-traditional students including part-time working adults that commute. Growth of the University as very strong over the last 10 years (14%) leading to new housing options on campus. Approximately 650 students live on-campus. The University is experiencing a leveling of growth and does not anticipate the need to explore off-campus

housing alternatives. If the University decided to place more emphasis on growth by recruiting more traditional-type students, it has identified adequate space to do so on-campus. In addition, the College Hill Apartments and Town Homes have added 222 new units as of 2008.

The public elementary school facilities - Stout and Quinton Heights - for neighborhood children are not considered to be in safe walking distance from the neighborhood. Robinson Middle School serves the area within better proximity just three blocks to the north of the neighborhood.

# ChesneyPark Existing Land Uses Map #1



Topeka Planning Department (April, 2009)



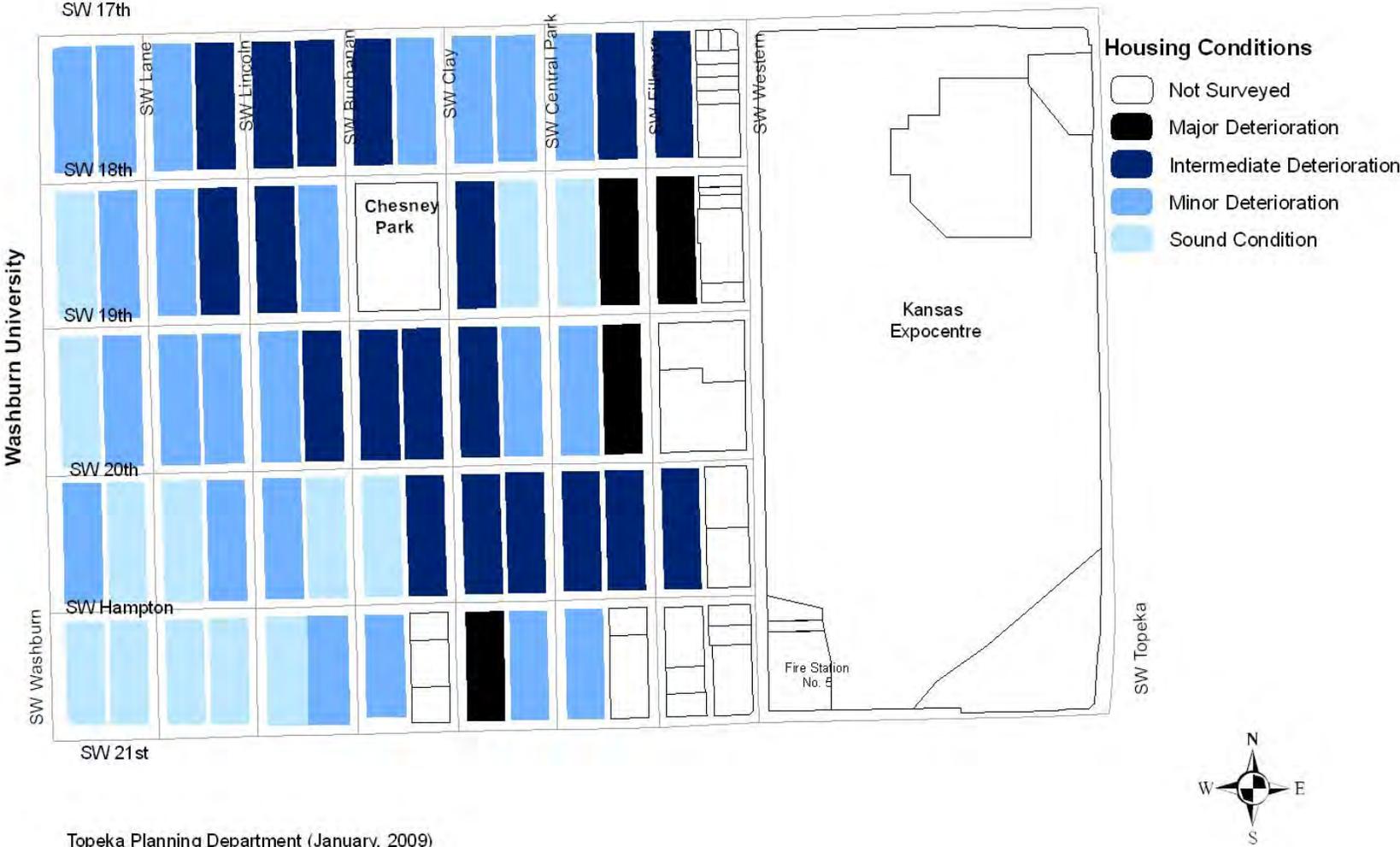
# Chesney Park Existing Zoning Map #2



Topeka Planning Department (January, 2009)



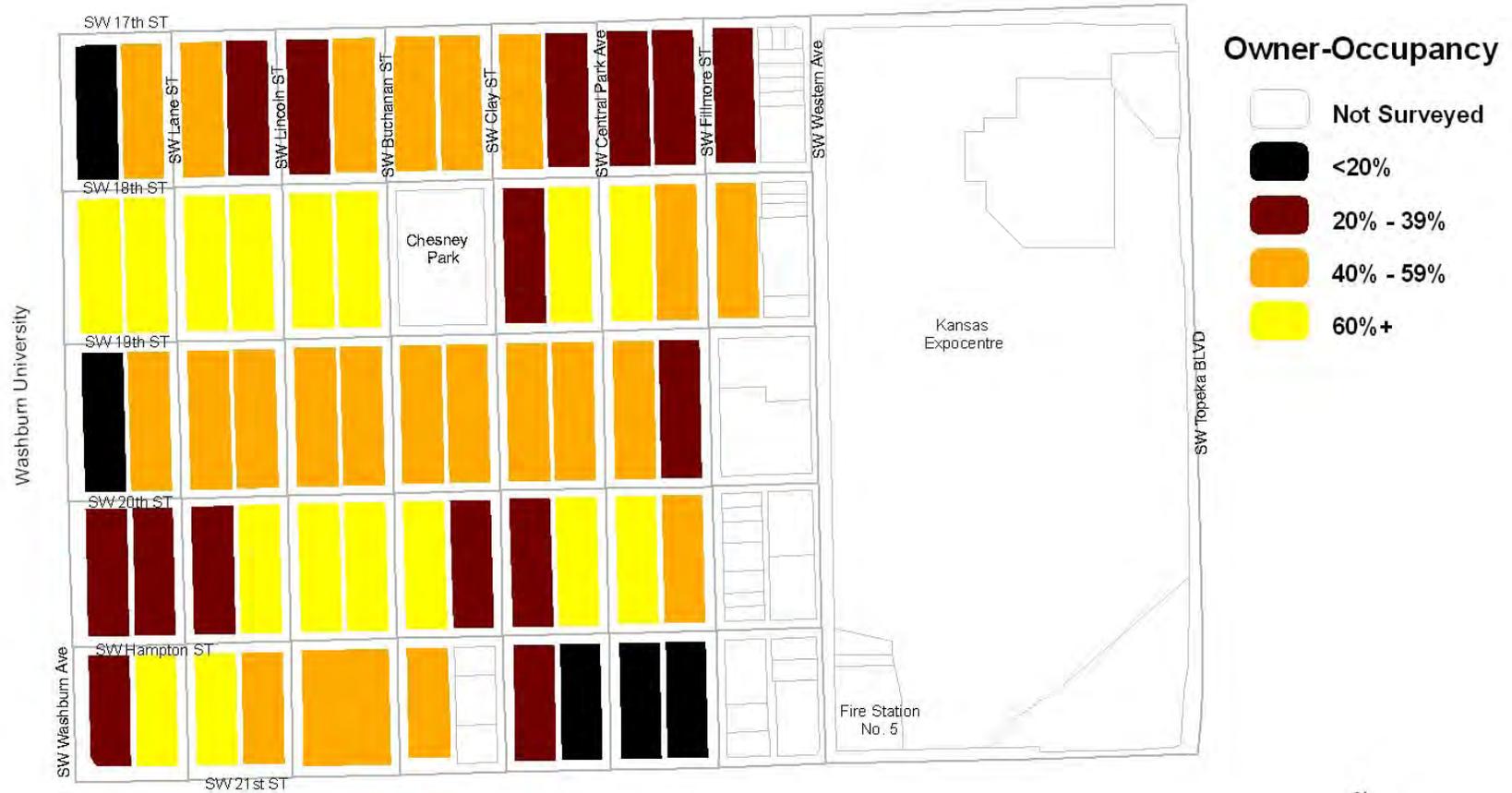
# Chesney Park Housing Conditions (by block) Map #3



Topeka Planning Department (January, 2009)



# Chesney Park Housing Tenure (by block) Map #4



Topeka Planning Department (January, 2009)





# Chesney Park Development Activity Map #6



Topeka Planning Department (January, 2009)

## C. SOCIOECONOMIC TRENDS

Chesney Park is located within Census Tract #4 and is entirely within block group #4. Demographic trends indicate that the total population of the neighborhood increased by seven percent (7%) from 1990 to 2000 (reference [Table #7](#)). The Hispanic population increased significantly (149%). In addition, U.S. Census Bureau statistics for this period reveal an increase in the number of individuals from “Other” racial categories by 188%, which would include those considered multi-racial. This option was not available in the 1990 Census and may explain the decrease in the number of Caucasian and black individuals in the neighborhood (-12% and -5% respectively). The Chesney Park neighborhood, therefore, had a larger and more racially diverse population in the year 2000 than in 1990.

Age cohort information in [Table #8](#) shows that children between the ages of 5 and 14 experienced the largest population growth from 1990 to 2000. In fact, the neighborhood as a whole became much younger as over 40% of the population is under the age of 19, while the 55 and older age cohort declined by -43% from 1990 to 2000. The 20-24 age cohort experienced a significant growth as well (34%), which may be due to the construction of the Washburn Place apartment complex located at SW 19<sup>th</sup> Street and Washburn Avenue.

While the number of households in the neighborhood increased by 8% during this period, the number of families declined by almost -4% as well, as seen in [Table #9](#). The number of female-headed households increased 5% from 1990 to 2000, but the number of children under the age of 18 in this type of family decreased significantly, by almost -53%.

Average income statistics for the neighborhood have decreased during the past decade. The median income for the neighborhood (when adjusting for inflation) decreased by -9% from 1990 to 2000. The level of poverty has increased as well, from 21% of the neighborhood population in 1990 to over 30% in 2000. The decrease in the number of families and the decline of actual income statistics represent very poor trends for the overall health of the neighborhood.

**Table 7**  
**Population – Chesney Park**

	2000	%	1990	%	Change '90-'00
<b>Population</b>	1,392	100%	1,303	100%	6.8%
<b>Gender</b>					
Female	695	49.9%	679	52.1%	2%
Male	697	50.1%	624	47.9%	12%
<b>Race</b>					
White	771	55.4%	875	67.2%	-12%
Black	287	20.6%	302	23.2%	-5%
Other	147	10.6%	51	3.9%	188%
Hispanic	187	13.4%	75	5.8%	149%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau – 2000 & 1990

**Table 8  
Age – Chesney Park**

	2000	%	1990	%	Change '90-'00
<b>Under 5 years</b>	172	12.4%	127	9.7%	35.4%
<b>5 to 9 years</b>	142	10.2%	90	6.9%	57.8%
<b>10 to 14 years</b>	148	10.6%	97	7.4%	52.6%
<b>15 to 19 years</b>	103	7.4%	84	6.4%	22.6%
<b>20 to 44 years</b>	560	40.2%	545	41.8%	2.8%
<b>45 to 54 years</b>	122	8.8%	104	8.0%	17.3%
<b>55 to 64 years</b>	64	4.6%	74	5.7%	-13.5%
<b>65 and Over</b>	81	5.8%	182	14.0%	-55.5%
<b>Total Persons</b>	<b>1,392</b>		<b>1,303</b>		
<b>Median Age</b>	28		29		

Source: U.S. Census Bureau – 2000 & 1990

**Table 9  
Households – Chesney Park**

	2000	%	1990	%	% Change '90-'00
<b>Households</b>	532	100%	491	100%	8.4%
<b>Families</b>	300	56.4%	311	63.3%	-3.5%
<b>Husband-Wife</b>	187	35.2%	191	38.9%	-2.1%
<b>Female-Headed   w/child &lt;18</b>	126	23.7%	120	24.4%	5.0%
	37	7.0%	80	16.3%	-53.8%
<b>Persons per HH</b>	2.65		2.65		-0.1%
<b>Persons per Family</b>	4.64		4.19		10.7%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau – 2000 & 1990

**Table 10  
Income – Chesney Park**

	2000	1990*	% Change
<b>Median Household Income</b>	\$24,510	\$27,060	-9%
<b>Average Family Income</b>	\$26,350	\$30,330	-13.1%
<b>Per Capita Income</b>	\$9,910	\$12,140	-18.4%
<b>Below Poverty</b>			
<b>% Persons</b>	30.1%	21.0%	+ 9.1%
<b>% Children &lt;18</b>	50.8%	28.3%	+ 22.5%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau – 2000 & 1990  
\* In 2000 dollars

**Table 11  
Educational Attainment & Employment Status**

	2000	1990
<b>Persons (25+ yrs.)</b>	645	721
<b>H.S. graduates</b>	41.9%	40.6%
<b>College 4 yrs.+</b>	15.8%	13.9%
<b>Unemployment Rate</b>	9.8%	10.4%

*Source: U.S. Census Bureau – 2000 & 1990*

**D. SUMMARY OF CONDITIONS**

While some conditions within the Chesney Park neighborhood have stabilized and even improved over the last decade, the neighborhood is still in a poor overall state of health. The following bullet points are a summary of the most relevant discoveries made in updating this plan. Some of these discoveries represent forces that may constrain efforts to improve the neighborhood, while others represent opportunities that may be an advantage to the Chesney Park neighborhood.

- In 1998, most of the neighborhood was rezoned from multi-family to single-family land use.
- The owner-occupancy rate for the neighborhood has stabilized and even improved, albeit very slightly to a rate of 34% after a major drop during the 1980s.
- Nearly one-third of all residential dwelling units are either two-family or multi-family structures.
- The number of converted multi-family dwellings (single-family homes that have been converted into three or more apartments) decreased significantly since 1998.
- Housing conditions in the neighborhood appear to have remained stable since 1998. Seven (7) blocks improved, while five (5) blocks deteriorated. The most improvement was along SW Central Park Ave, and the most deterioration occurred along SW Clay St.
- Demolition permits outnumber new construction permits by 6 to 1 since 1997.
- Vacant land is the second most common land use in the neighborhood and comprises 10% of all parcels and over 10% of the total land area.
- Non-residential development has increasingly encroached upon the single-family neighborhood.
- U.S. Census Bureau statistics indicate that the population of the neighborhood increased and became more racially diverse from 1990 to 2000.
- The neighborhood became much younger as 40% of the total population is under the age of 19, while the number of people over 55 years declined by 43%. Safe and adequate streets, sidewalks, alleys, lighting and parks are more important than ever now.

- Average incomes in the neighborhood are decreasing, while the poverty rate is increasing in the neighborhood as well.
- The number of children under the age of 18 living in poverty increased by over 40% from 1990 to 2000.

Chesney Park is still in a position to achieve reinvestment and recapture stable living conditions within its borders. Many of the conditions evident today are manifested due to past construction and policy inconsistencies. For example, the neighborhood was zoned for multi-family uses for a number of years until recently. The predominant “R-1” single-family zoning throughout Chesney Park should instill confidence among existing and future homeowners for years to come.

Meanwhile, the neighborhood’s growth is limited to the east and west by the Kansas Expocentre and the Washburn University campus, and a cloud of uncertainty has presided over Chesney Park regarding expansion plans for the last 30 years. The area along SW Western Avenue and the Expocentre is more industrialized in character and generally has a negative impact on residential properties in the area. Many homes in this area have been razed either to make way for non-residential development, or because of their dilapidated conditions.

The neighborhood, as a whole, has many assets on which to build today: The Fairgrounds’ pig pens and race tracks have given way to a modern sports arena, convention center, and four-star hotel with ample landscaped open space. The Shunga Trail recreational path has been extended just south and east of the neighborhood. A number of homes have been converted back to single-family dwellings from apartments. Many attractive blocks of solid homes with historic character exist. The park continues to be improved through the support of the NIA. A cluster of vacant lots exist to be marketed for new housing development. Decorative lighting has strengthened both the University’s and the neighborhood’s “front door”. Washburn University grows and continues to support neighborhood clean-ups and other improvement activities. Finally, the City and the NIA partnered on fixing up SW Central Park Avenue with housing and infrastructure upgrades. Most importantly, the neighborhood has leadership and citizen involvement to take the next step towards Chesney Park’s ultimate comeback.

### III. VISION & GOALS

#### A. VISION STATEMENT

*The Chesney Park neighborhood is a safe, pleasant and attractive neighborhood of homeowners that benefits by the presence and accountability of its institutional anchors – the Kansas Expocentre and Washburn University. As evidenced by the Great Mural Wall, residents have a strong sense of community in which neighbors, both new and old, share common values and take the utmost pride in their homes and the well-being of their local institutions. The Chesney Park neighborhood is proud to be the gateway to the Washburn-Lane Parkway and the rest of the Topeka community.*

#### B. GOALS & GUIDING PRINCIPLES

##### **Overall Goal:**

**Rebuild community character and restore confidence among the public that the Chesney Park neighborhood is a safe and attractive place to live and own a home.**

#### **Guiding Principles**

##### **LAND USE**

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- ✓ Single-family residential land use, as the predominate and intended land use of the neighborhood, should remain viable and be protected from encroachment of higher intensity land uses.
- ✓ Medium and higher density residential land uses should be located away from the neighborhood's interior to where there is a stronger relationship to higher traffic corridors, centers of activity and where it will not encroach upon stable single-family residential blocks.
- ✓ Where viable, maintain low density land uses on the edges of the neighborhood to better reflect the neighborhood's appropriate single-family character and image.
- ✓ Concentrate new commercial retail/service development within existing commercial business districts south of SW 21<sup>st</sup> Street and north of SW 17<sup>th</sup> Street; prohibit strip commercialization along neighborhood edges.
- ✓ Encourage quality expansion of the Expocentre that is compatible with a residential neighborhood; discourage encroachment of Expocentre and other non-residential uses along SW Fillmore Street.

- ✓ Major changes in land use should have a back-to-back configuration, and if not, landscaping and other techniques should be employed to appropriately buffer single-family residential blocks from the impacts of medium to high-intensity level land uses.
- ✓ Over time, encourage conversion of light industrial land uses along SW Western Avenue to lower intensity land uses, such as office, institutional, and research and development facilities, with appropriate zoning and development standards that are more compatible with low density residential uses.

## **HOUSING**

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- ✓ Maintain and stabilize the heaviest concentrations of owner-occupied housing; as a priority, encourage rehabilitation of deteriorated housing stock within target areas.
- ✓ Strive to obtain a neighborhood of no abandoned homes and no vacant lots.
- ✓ Increase overall homeownership levels by placing a high priority on assisting blocks to achieve an owner-occupancy rate greater than 50%.
- ✓ Ensure that new infill housing and the rehabilitation of existing homes compliment the traditional design of the neighborhood.
- ✓ Demolition of structures should only be supported where they have become a blighting influence, they lack viability of long-term success, they are part of a targeted infill or rehabilitation strategy on a particular block or they are impediments to achieving other goals of the Plan.
- ✓ Identify, preserve and restore buildings with historic significance.
- ✓ Work cooperatively with landlords to better maintain properties and responsibly address problems with tenants.

## **COMMUNITY CHARACTER**

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- ✓ Identify, preserve, and enhance community assets to improve neighborhood identity, foster pride, and encourage investment.
- ✓ Designate SW Washburn Avenue as the “front door” to the neighborhood and University; ensure that streetscape and development is duly respectful in quality, materials, orientation (i.e., building frontages should face Washburn Ave.), design, (i.e., parking not visible from Washburn).
- ✓ Recognize SW 17<sup>th</sup> Street as a major corridor from Interstate 70, especially to Washburn University. Support streetscape and building improvements that complements the image of Washburn University, Central Topeka and the City as a whole.
- ✓ Require and maintain adequate buffering of higher density residential uses along SW Washburn Avenue from lower density residential uses along SW Lane Street.
- ✓ Upgrade deteriorated infrastructure (alleys, sidewalks, curbs, etc.) to present standards.
- ✓ Brick sidewalks and streets that are in good condition should be preserved.
- ✓ Preserve stone curbs to the greatest extent possible.
- ✓ Maintain and enhance Chesney Park as the neighborhood’s only recreational open space.
- ✓ Locate appropriate signage for the neighborhood to improve the identity and image of the area.

## **TRANSPORTATION**

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- ✓ Provide for safe patterns of circulation throughout the neighborhood that are compatible with quality of life expectations.
- ✓ Improve/maintain pedestrian walkways to be safe and accessible.
- ✓ Prohibit additional curb cuts along major thoroughfares.
- ✓ Discourage unnecessary through traffic on north-south local streets.
- ✓ Maintain open access to SW Western Avenue as a viable route for emergency vehicles without negatively impacting existing response times, neighborhood residents, or Expocentre users.
- ✓ Neighborhood streets should be well lit.
- ✓ “Connect” the Shunga Trail to the neighborhood and Washburn University.

## IV. LAND USE PLAN

The Chesney Park neighborhood planning area currently contains a mix of land uses including residential, commercial, industrial, office, institutional, retail, and open space. The Chesney Park Land Use Plan map shows a long-term guide for land use development of the neighborhood that embodies the vision, goals, and policies presented in Section III. The Map generally depicts the preferred land use categories and is intended to be more conceptual than explicit in terms of land use boundaries. The following text describes the land use categories and their purpose in greater detail:

### A. LAND USE CATEGORIES

**Residential – Low Density:** This category comprises the majority of the neighborhood and its interior in particular. Where it is designated along arterial streets, such as on SW 21<sup>st</sup> Street between SW Lane and Buchanan Streets, it is generally considered to be a stable area in need of preservation with local street frontage. The neighborhood was originally developed for single family residential land uses in a low density environment. Because the neighborhood has evolved to include a number of two-family and multiple-family uses, its low density character has been altered somewhat and its stability threatened. This land use category recognizes these existing conditions while restricting future development to single family uses only.

**Primary Uses:** Single-family dwellings (detached)

**Zoning Districts:** “R-1” and “R-2” (Single Family)

**Density/Intensity:** 4.0 dwelling units/acre

**Residential – Medium Density:** This category is primarily applied to the western periphery of the neighborhood along SW Washburn Avenue facing Washburn University. Current land uses indicate that a higher density of residential development has occurred in two of the five blocks facing on the street. Within the remaining three blocks, low density single-family uses predominate. Building surveys suggest that the single-family uses, while not predominantly owner-occupied, are in sound condition. Because of the existence of still viable single-family type uses and their ability to provide a necessary buffer adjacent to the most stabilized blocks in the neighborhood, it is imperative that the housing density remains of a moderate nature. High density development carried out on the remainder of this corridor would severely encumber the ability of the neighborhood’s most stable area to retain current homeownership levels and property values.

Likewise, this corridor is considered both the neighborhood’s and the University’s “front door”. A consistent and appealing image along this corridor is considered preferable for both the neighborhood and University. It is recommended that each block maintain it’s predominate character so that development of an inconsistent character and/or higher density is not randomly dispersed alongside detached single-family houses in a piecemeal fashion. Development and design

that detracts from a quality uniform frontage for the neighborhood and University should not be encouraged. Therefore, medium density is proposed collectively for this corridor and is intended to recognize density levels allowed by the existing zoning while restricting any further increases in residential density. The 14 units/acre density maximum is based on allowable “build-out” under the existing zoning. Greater density should only be permitted as a condition of meeting higher quality design guidelines as outlined in this Plan.

**Primary Uses:** Single-family, Two-family, and Multiple-family dwellings

**Zoning Districts:** “M-1” (Two-Family) and “M-2” (Multiple-Family)

**Density/Intensity:** 8.0 – 14.0 dwelling units/acre

**Office:** This designation applies to the American Red Cross building located at SW 17<sup>th</sup> and Lincoln Street, as well as the Board of County Commissioners office building located near SW 17<sup>th</sup> and Topeka Boulevard. The designation recognizes these existing land uses as appropriate for the neighborhood and discourages conversion of these properties for commercial uses in the future. Expansion of office uses should be encouraged along arterials if possible and not into the exclusively single-family residential portions of the neighborhood.

**Primary Uses:** Office and Institutional uses

**Zoning Districts:** “O&I 1” (Office and Institutional)

**Density/Intensity:** Medium

**Office/Residential:** This designation is located along SW 21<sup>st</sup> Street between SW Clay and Fillmore Streets. The presence of some underutilized land and proximity to a principal arterial street give it slightly more development intensity potential. An office building at SW Clay and 21<sup>st</sup> Street, formerly occupied by Family Service & Guidance, allows for an office-intensive use, while Rose Villa residential-care facility located at SW Fillmore and 21<sup>st</sup> Street is residential-intensive. An unused parking lot, car wash and used car sales business further contribute to the mix of land uses and inconsistent image of this area. A mixture of medium density residential and office/institutional uses that reflect existing patterns of development and that are unobtrusive to the neighborhood’s single-family character are considered most appropriate. Topography and adequate space for buffering dictate the spatial needs for the land use designation in this area. Commercial retail/service use should not be expanded along the north side of SW 21<sup>st</sup> Street to prevent the impacts of strip commercialization within the neighborhood and to encourage clustering to other established nearby commercial districts.

**Primary Uses:** Single-family and Two-family dwellings, Office, and Institutional uses

**Zoning Districts:** “M-1a” (Limited-Family), “O&I-1” (Office and Institutional)

**Density/Intensity:** Medium

**Commercial:** The Plan recognizes appropriate existing commercial use areas at SW 17<sup>th</sup> Street and Washburn Avenue, SW 21<sup>st</sup> Street and Western Avenue, and SW 21<sup>st</sup> Street and Topeka Boulevard. However, new commercial retail/service uses should be encouraged to locate within existing commercial

business districts outside of the neighborhood along the south side of SW 21<sup>st</sup> Street or north of SW 17<sup>th</sup> Street at Washburn Avenue. In general, commercial retail/service uses along 17<sup>th</sup> Street and 21<sup>st</sup> Street should be clustered within larger existing commercial districts at arterial street intersections so as to promote more efficient development patterns that are beneficial to both its users and neighbors.

**Primary Uses:** Commercial retail/service

**Zoning Districts (17<sup>th</sup> Street):** “C-1” (Commercial)

**Zoning Districts (21<sup>st</sup> Street):** “C-3”, “C-4” (Commercial)

**Density/Intensity:** Low-High

**Institutional:** Institutional uses and public facilities are recognized by this designation, not including the Expocentre-related uses. The City of Topeka has two public facilities – the Water Distribution Facility and Fire Station No. 5 – that the Plan recognizes to retain within the neighborhood Plan area. The fire station location serves a critical and strategic public purpose and represents a major investment by the City when it was relocated from SW Topeka Boulevard in 1987. Because of its dependable access via SW Western Avenue to its service area, the location and its access should remain unrestricted.

**Primary Uses:** Public Facility

**Zoning Districts:** Variable

**Density/Intensity:** Medium

**Expocentre:** The purpose of the “Expocentre” designation is to not only recognize the planned development of existing Expocentre facilities and grounds, but to identify and plan for appropriate expansion areas to meet their present and future needs. While the Expocentre does not have any significant plans for expansion within the next few years, it does have an immediate need to meet parking demands for events that occur simultaneously at the arena, exhibition hall, conference center, hotel, and/or livestock facilities. It also has identified demand to support expanded livestock events.

In order to accommodate these potential needs, it is highly probable that on-and/or off-site expansion of the Expocentre is necessary in the future. Several alternatives for an expansion were identified and assessed in the previous *Chesney Park Land Use Plan*. To accommodate sufficient parking or facility expansion while providing for adequate buffering, whole-block areas instead of half-block areas are recommended as the most advantageous to meet any expansion needs. In many respects, this type of expansion may be seen as most preferable from a neighborhood revitalization standpoint.

SW Western Avenue between SW 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> Streets, is a likely candidate for expanded parking to meet the existing and future growth of the Maner Conference Center as well as the livestock pavilion. Several vacant lots, which make up a portion of the block, are now being used for overflow parking or staging for events as needed. It is probably not central enough to existing Expocentre facilities to provide for structured parking or facility expansion. This area should be improved with paved parking, fencing, landscaping and sidewalks in order to be most compatible with nearby residential uses.

**Primary Uses:** Expocentre-related facilities and parking  
**Zoning Districts:** “PUD” (Planned Unit Development)  
**Density/Intensity:** Medium-High

**Industrial:** This designation recognizes existing uses and businesses in the area and is located along blocks that would also be well-suited for Expocentre expansion in the future, if the need arises. Ideally, however, light industrial uses such as light manufacturing, assembly, distribution, processing, warehousing, etc., would be located farther away from the neighborhood and areas of single-family housing. This designation does not support light industrial uses in the case of wholesale re-development of these blocks, but does support the expansion of existing uses.

**Primary Uses:** Light manufacturing, storage, assembly, processing, etc.  
**Zoning Districts:** “I-1” (Light Industrial)  
**Density/Intensity:** Medium-High

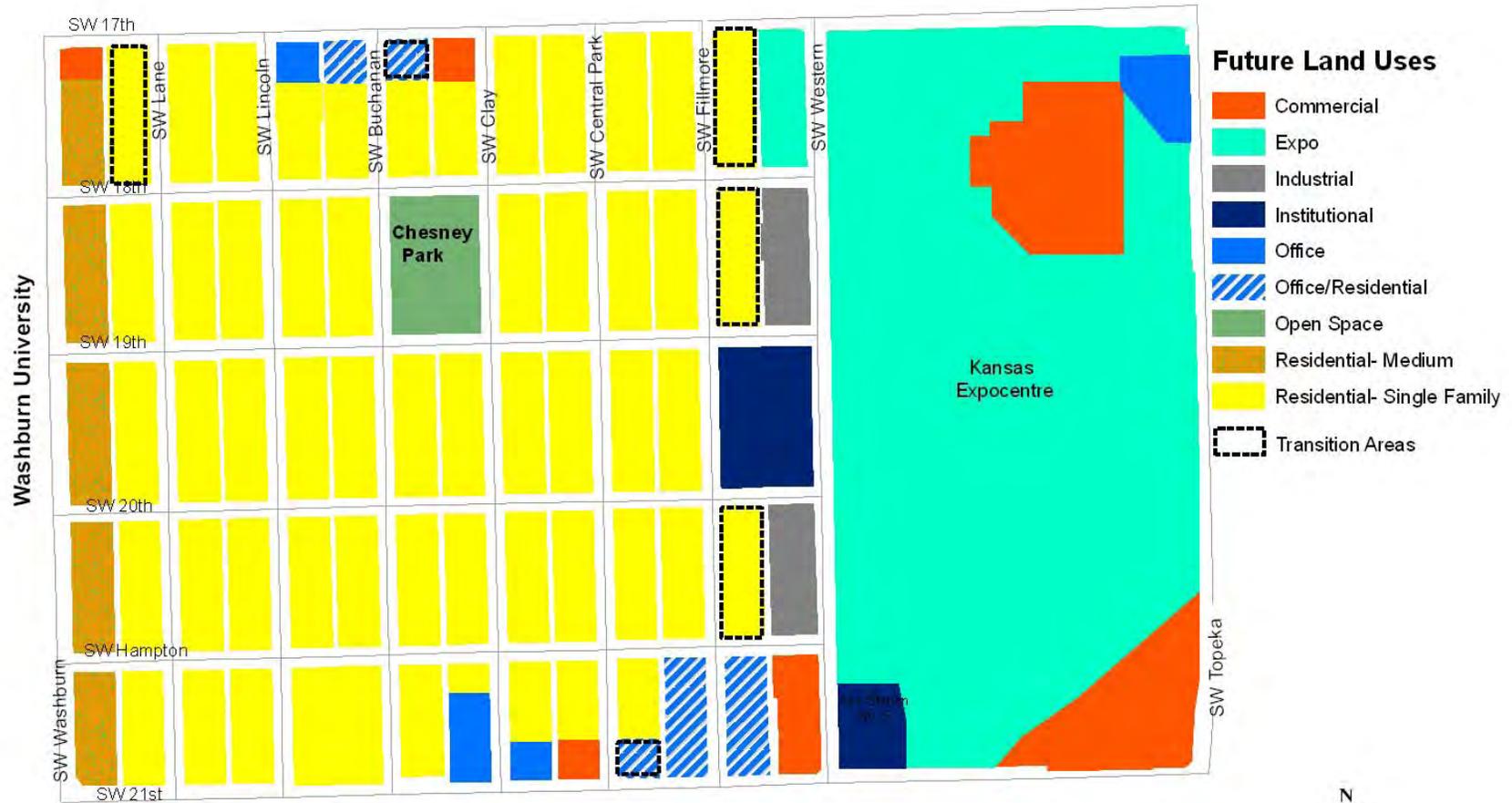
**Open Space:** The only open space use is designated for “Chesney Park” bounded by SW Clay, Buchanan, 18<sup>th</sup>, and 19<sup>th</sup> Streets. As the historical impetus behind the neighborhood, the park should be maintained and enhanced so as to be the neighborhood’s focal point for community gatherings, events, and recreation with a balance of passive and active uses.

**Primary Uses:** Park  
**Zoning Districts:** “R-1” (Single-Family)  
**Density/Intensity:** Very Low



**Transition Areas:** Blocks marked with dashed lines indicate areas that could potentially re-develop at higher intensity levels for *non-single family* purposes due to existing underlying zoning, the presence of vacant land, deteriorated/blighted structures, or other nearby non-residential uses. It is recommended that if non-residential development (or higher intensity residential development) is pursued within these areas, that it be within a Planned Unit Development (PUD) or similar zoning designation. The PUD designation would provide a more flexible range of permitted land uses within these locations while applying appropriate standards upon higher intensity development that may impact the long-term viability of single-family homes in the neighborhood. Development within the Transition Areas should apply appropriate design standards in terms of materials, access, building orientation, scale, architecture, etc. for potentially incompatible uses such as parking lots/structures, public facilities, outside storage, and office uses, among others. Acceptable design standards anticipated under the PUD designation may include, but are not limited to, fencing, vegetative/decorative plantings, berming, tree retention, street closures/cul-de-sacs, below grade development, height limitations, as well as placing utilities underground. Commercial or industrial development should only be considered if it incorporates transitional buffering standards into its design. Alleys should be considered for vacation as long as access is prohibited from the local street frontage.

# Chesney Park Future Land Use Plan Map #7



Washburn University

Topeka Planning Department (April, 2009)



## V. REVITALIZATION STRATEGY

*“Necessity is the mother of taking chances.”*

**Mark Twain**

### A. THEMES

- **Get Noticed.** Chesney Park is located between two of Topeka’s most recognizable institutions, yet the neighborhood itself is often overlooked by residents and visitors to the city alike. As a visible first impression, the edges of a community announce the type of community behind it. If the edges look run-down, forgotten, or disconnected, the likely perception people (outsiders and residents) will have is that it mirrors what is behind those edges. Edges can become a mental “wall” or “welcome mat”. Chesney Park is defined by its very visible edges along major thoroughfares, and thus must be improved.
- **Protect Strengths** – The recommendations in this plan should serve to protect the assets and strengths inherent in the neighborhood. However, even a strong chain is only as good as its weakest link. Making the weakest link stronger is a strategy that will make the whole neighborhood stronger and ensure that investments in the neighborhood are sustainable over the long haul.
- **Crime & Image: Interwoven Destinies.** The Chesney Park neighborhood generally has an unsafe image among the Topeka community. But that perception is typically caused by a few hotspots of criminal activity or dilapidated conditions visible to the passer-by. Residents know that all blocks are not like this. Regardless of where physical improvements are made, therefore, it must be remembered that criminal hotspots must be addressed wherever they occur in the neighborhood in order to make revitalization efforts work in other parts of the neighborhood.
- **New Homes, More Owners.** Chesney Park is currently inhabited mostly by renters. While diversity is welcomed in such a unique urban environment, it is likely too imbalanced to foster stability in the neighborhood. Returning more units to homeownership potential and aggressively marketing for that type of occupant is essential. The value of a refurbished home in Chesney Park is still lower than in other areas because much of the integrity of the housing in the neighborhood is gone. New homes and more homeowners will fill in the missing gaps already apparent and help repair the torn fabric of the neighborhood.
- **Grow Your Grassroots.** The grassroots efforts of neighborhood stakeholders, or “troops on the ground”, have been a great service to not only the Chesney Park neighborhood, but to the city as a whole. Continuing these efforts and maintaining strong-rooted connections to the residents in the neighborhood are an absolute must for the long-term success of Chesney Park.

## B. TARGET AREA STRATEGIES

### The Concept (Where to Start?)

Much like how neighborhoods make up the fabric of a city, blocks make up the fabric of a neighborhood. When the fabric is strong the city or the neighborhood is strong. If the fabric becomes frayed, wears down or forms a gap, the city or neighborhood becomes weak and susceptible to accelerated decay. The most successful strategies in neighborhood revitalization involve the repairing and re-weaving of this fabric. To do this, a neighborhood revitalization strategy must protect key assets or anchors, isolate weaknesses, and re-position them as strengths. Map #8 depicts these current features of the Chesney Park neighborhood as defined below:

**Anchor** – These are rigid points of support that give a neighborhood identity. They are long-term community investments that draw people to them as destination thereby lending stability to the area and making them desirous for residential investment. (e.g., Schools, Churches, Parks)

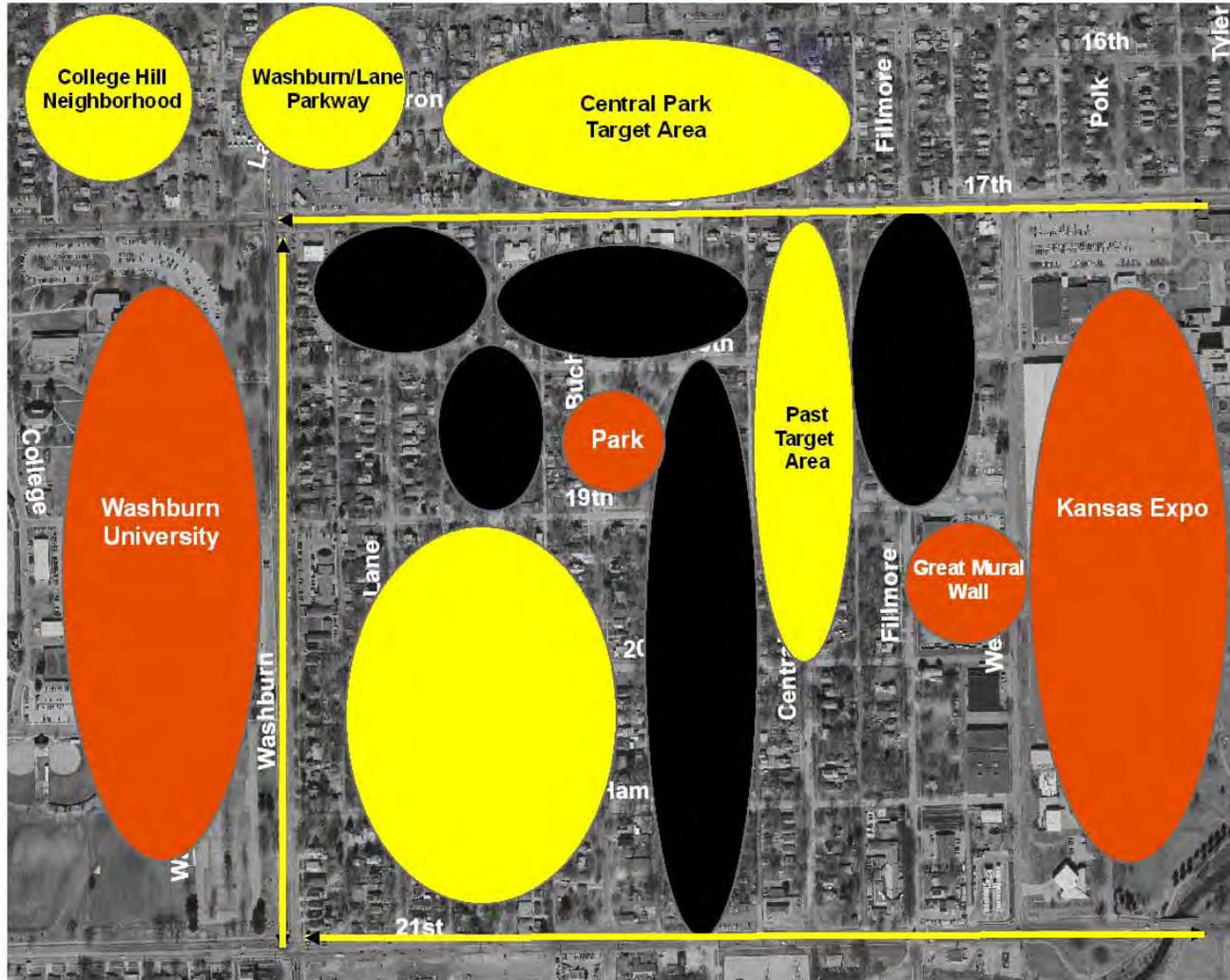
**Strength/Potential** – These areas are the relatively strongest blocks of a neighborhood which exhibit staying power and/or recent investment. These are also underachieving areas that have the potential to become strengths or anchors given an appropriate stimulus. (e.g., City-sponsored development in Tennessee Town)

**Weakness** – These have the highest concentrations of negative conditions such as low homeownership, vacant/boarded houses, poverty and high crime. The more concentrated these are, the greater social problems occur and the more entrenched they become. Diluting their concentration gives surrounding areas a greater chance to revitalize on their own.

Spatial relationships play a dynamic role in the overall concept. Spread too thin, anchors or areas of strength will fail to influence beyond their natural reach leaving poorly performing areas little hope of turning around on their own. Conversely, if anchors or areas of strength are spaced more evenly and linked to their surroundings they will begin to influence the poorly performing blocks around it by creating greater confidence in those areas. Much like a shopping mall where the stores between two anchors will benefit from greater pedestrian traffic, weaker blocks isolated between two closely placed areas of strength will be prone to more investment. The fabric of the neighborhood can be re-woven back together by protecting anchors and making the most of the existing areas of strength in order to squeeze out older markets that do not work.

Image also plays an important role in a neighborhood's revitalization. A neighborhood's strength is often based upon market perception. If the market only knows about a neighborhood based on negative images (e.g., crime reports, run down edges, etc.), improving these images can begin to change market attitudes and introduce new investment to the area.

# Chesney Park Target Area Concept & Existing Conditions Map #8



- Anchor Area
- Strength / Potential
- Weakness
- Stable

Topeka Planning Department (March, 2009)



If followed, the above strategy will also ensure that public dollars are invested wisely. The City has currently committed to investing several million dollars into the Chesney Park and Ward Meade neighborhoods in 2010 and 2011. The goal of any public investment is to leverage the greatest amount of private investment possible. These public dollars should be carefully targeted to blocks that will give the neighborhood the best chance to succeed for years to come (i.e., re-establish market forces). If done correctly, focusing resources in a portion of the neighborhood should not only transform the affected area, but also effectively stabilize the blocks around it and entice new investment from the private sector.

## **Target Areas**

The following “target areas” have been selected based upon the existing conditions of the neighborhood and their potential for revitalization. They represent blocks with the most collective weaknesses and are listed in order of priority. Their conditions, potential, strategies, and improvements are discussed in detail.

### **☑ *Northwest (1700 blocks from SW Lane to Clay St. & 1800 blocks of Lincoln, Buchanan, and Clay.)***

–This area is one of the weakest of the neighborhood, yet it is also one of the most strategic as well. The 1700 blocks of SW Clay, Buchanan, and Lincoln show a disjointed pattern of vacant or under-utilized lots, mixed land uses, unkempt yards, lost architectural integrity, solid starter homes, converted single-family homes, new sidewalks, crumbling curbs, several beautifully rehabbed homes, and gravel/dirt driveways. As a result of this disheveled appearance, crime, poor housing conditions and rental occupancy rates are all higher than normal in these blocks. This is creating a drag on the remainder of the neighborhood because they are the first blocks with the most exposure off of SW 17<sup>th</sup> Street. However, this area also has several advantages making it a logical choice to have the most impact on the neighborhood and city as a whole if targeted for public investment:

- ✓ It boasts several key examples of anchors to build from - the Red Cross headquarters, a vintage brick gas station being adaptively re-used for a residence, two handsomely restored residences in the 1700 block of Clay, and “Chesney Park”;
- ✓ It is positioned between the new College Hill redevelopment, the Central Park target area, and the strongest portion of the neighborhood in the southwest quadrant; and
- ✓ It lies along 17<sup>th</sup> Street, a major image corridor and key gateway into Washburn University, the Expocentre, and other central city neighborhoods.

Targeting this area should be the highest priority if for no other reason than to stabilize the blocks around the Red Cross building in order to retain them as the most positive anchor for the neighborhood. While they have not

indicated any plans to move, losing them would send a very damaging signal to the community about Chesney Park. The other significance of targeting this area is the exposure it would have along 17<sup>th</sup> Street and the ability to jump-start 4 streets in the neighborhood. This corridor is the first and probably only impression of the neighborhood for visitors and commuters who use this route to Downtown, Washburn University, Central Park, the Expocentre, and Interstate 70. Reconnecting these blocks to areas of strength will allow the fabric of a larger area of the city to be potentially restored and achieve the most positive marketing for the neighborhood. The treatment of this area should be one of moderate to high intervention in order to “stop the bleeding”, including land clearance, land acquisition, multiple in-fill housing projects, and beautification of 17<sup>th</sup> Street.

- Primary targeting efforts should take place in the 1700 blocks of SW Lane, SW Lincoln, SW Buchanan, and SW Clay.
- A secondary area should be established in the 1800 blocks of SW Lincoln, Buchanan, and Clay Streets in order to protect the image of the park from poor housing conditions. This area should only be included for targeting if the demolition and infill approach in the 1700 blocks are successful as described further below.
- Housing strategies should primarily include:
  - Interior/exterior rehabilitation of many existing owner-occupied homes.
  - Exterior rehab of some renter-occupied homes.
  - Conversion of some renter-occupied homes into owner-occupied homes.
  - Vacant lots with little potential to support new housing should be incorporated with adjacent properties to help alleviate blight amongst these areas. Additionally, vacant and deteriorated structures that lack viability for long-term owner-occupancy should be selectively demolished. New infill units should be built where the opportunity exists; otherwise the adjoining property owner(s) should be given the opportunity to incorporate the empty lot after the unit is demolished.
- Infill housing for homeownership should be targeted first along the 1700 block of SW Lincoln and the northwestern portion of the 1700 block of Buchanan Street. The current state of deteriorated housing conditions and architectural integrity in these blocks suggests that rehabilitation of existing homes will not produce the amount of change that is necessary to stabilize and reverse the downward trend of these blocks. Therefore, voluntary demolitions and acquisition of property for infill should be a priority in these blocks. The new single-family units should meet the Plan’s design guidelines
- Parking lot behind the American Red Cross building could be used for infill development in exchange for land along 17<sup>th</sup> Street for parking provided it is well landscaped. The Red Cross holds training sessions in the evenings and has expressed the need for more safety with parking.

- SW 17<sup>th</sup> Street improvements and beautification. (see page 59 for more details).
- Infrastructure improvements should include construction of concrete alleys and sidewalks, curb/gutter repair, mill and overlay of streets and potential installation of additional street lighting.
- Part of the housing and infrastructure improvements need to address “curb appeal” aspects. Specifically, trees/vegetation need to be trimmed or removed and erosion of yard areas need to be prevented through necessary retaining walls, sod planting, fencing, or other means.



*A number of homes on smaller lots that either front or abut SW 17<sup>th</sup> Street are in deteriorating condition, and several have remained vacant for long periods. The house on the right has broken curbs and sidewalks, and an unpaved driveway that has led to parking in the front yard with little to no grass.*



*The two images above, located at 1700 SW Clay and Buchanan Streets respectively are a model for housing rehabilitation throughout the entire neighborhood, especially along SW 17<sup>th</sup> Street. The image to the left is an example of incorporating small, empty lots with adjacent properties, while the image to the right is a former gas station that has been adaptively re-used and refurbished with private funds for single-family occupancy.*



*A number of substantially deteriorated and vacant homes remain along the 1700 blocks of Lincoln and Buchanan Streets adjacent to the American Red Cross building. These homes should be cleared to pave the way for new single-family development that will stabilize these blocks and contribute to a healthy neighborhood.*

**SW Clay Street (SW 17<sup>th</sup> to 21<sup>st</sup> Street)**- The blocks along SW Clay Street should also be a high priority area because it connects the park to SW 17<sup>th</sup> Street and is important to the overall image of the neighborhood. Housing conditions have deteriorated the most within the neighborhood along this corridor since 1998 and crime is above average in this area. The alleys behind both sides of SW Clay Street are in particularly poor condition, while sidewalks, streets, curbs and gutters are in fair condition.

One advantage of targeting public resources along SW Clay Street is the large concentration of single-family homes that have not been converted into apartments. It can thus be expected that a reasonable amount of public investment should positively affect homeownership levels for the long-run. This will also have the benefit of protecting the eastern flank of “Chesney Park” as well as capitalizing upon recent targeting efforts and improvements along SW Central Park Avenue. One disadvantage of targeting SW Clay Street is that interior portions of the neighborhood do not have as much power to change the image of the neighborhood as do blocks adjacent to major thoroughfares such as SW 17<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> Streets. Also, a linear pattern of targeting only impacts one street. Recommendations include the following (also reference maps and tables in the Appendix):

- Housing strategies should include a combination of:
- Interior/exterior rehabilitation of many existing owner-occupied homes;
  - Exterior rehab of some renter-occupied homes;
  - Vacant lots with little potential to support new housing should be incorporated with adjacent properties to help alleviate blight amongst these areas. Additionally, vacant and deteriorated structures that lack viability for long-term owner-occupancy should be selectively demolished. New infill units should be built where

opportunities exist, otherwise adjoining property owner(s) should be given the opportunity to incorporate the empty lot.

- Redevelopment of the 1800 block of SW Clay Street for spot infill development consistent with the Plan's design guidelines. The historical integrity of some structures has been compromised.
- Infrastructure improvements should include construction of concrete alleys and sidewalks, curb/gutter repair, alleviating any storm drainage problems, mill and overlay of streets, and potential installation of additional mid-block street lights on the residential streets.
- Part of the housing and infrastructure improvements need to address "curb appeal" aspects, particularly the 1900-2000 blocks of SW Clay Street. Specifically, trees/vegetation need to be trimmed or removed and erosion of yard areas need to be prevented through necessary retaining walls, sod planting, fencing, or other means.



*Many homes such as these along SW Clay Street have deteriorating conditions such as rotted or sagging roofs, peeling and cracked paint, and broken or missing window panes, among other problems. Cooperation and investment with private owners to make even the smallest improvements to these structures will improve the quality of life within the neighborhood.*

- ☑ **SW Washburn Avenue (SW 17<sup>th</sup> to 21<sup>st</sup> Street)**- While the majority of homes along SW Washburn Avenue remain in sound condition, several blocks still suffer from sporadic blight and vacant units, most notably along the 1700 & 2000 blocks of SW Washburn Avenue next to commercial businesses. Many of the units in the 1700 block have been divided into apartments, which has left an inconsistent and unappealing image along this highly visible corridor. Targeting these blocks would increase the appeal along the "front door" of the neighborhood and the University, thus improving the general perception of the entire area.

However, public investment within these blocks should remain at a minimum as most of the units along the 1700 & 2000 blocks of SW Washburn Avenue are no longer viable for long-term single-family occupancy. The location of these blocks near the intersections of high traffic corridors as well as nearby commercial businesses suggest that housing at a slightly higher intensity level may be more appropriate, and also suggest that private market forces should be able to improve these areas. Homes in the remaining blocks are in

generally sound condition and do not require public intervention. If public assistance is desired for the most deteriorated blocks, several recommendations include the following:

- Housing strategies should include a combination of:
  - Interior/exterior rehabilitation of many existing owner-occupied homes;
  - Exterior rehab of some renter-occupied homes;
  - Vacant and deteriorated structures that lack viability for long-term owner-occupancy should be selectively demolished. New infill units should be built where opportunities exist, otherwise adjoining property owner(s) should be given the opportunity to incorporate the empty lot.
- Washburn University has identified a need for more age-specific housing, particularly for older alumni who wish to reside close to campus and remain involved in university activities. Current conditions along the 1700 block of SW Washburn Avenue suggest that this may be a prime location for redevelopment of this type of housing. New development, furthermore, should have a traditional architectural character that blends in with housing in the rest of the neighborhood; reference design guidelines.



*Most of the homes along the 1700 block of SW Washburn have been converted into apartments and are used as rental properties. Due to the location near an intersection of two busy arterial streets, these units are no longer viable for long-term single-family occupancy.*

- ☑ **SW Fillmore Street (SW 17<sup>th</sup> to 21<sup>st</sup> Street)** - SW Fillmore Street has become destabilized over the years primarily due to the old Kansas Fairgrounds and racetrack, the encroachment of institutional, industrial and commercial uses emanating from SW Western Street, and the possible expansion of the Kansas Expocentre. Empty lots are a predominate characteristic of these blocks and housing conditions remain poor.

There are several opportunities for redevelopment and revitalization that remain within this portion of the neighborhood. The most apparent opportunity to improve this area is through new housing construction, which should be encouraged primarily within the 1700-1900 blocks of SW Fillmore. The *Great Mural Wall* project, furthermore, is a boost of confidence

that this area will be maintained by the public and private sector, and will increase the quality of life within this area as well.

Public investment along SW Fillmore Street, however, should be conservative due to the way in which high-intensity land uses emanating from SW Western Avenue and the Kansas Expocentre undermine market forces. The exception to that would be any large-scale redevelopment on a block-to-block basis that can change the dynamics of the market. Public investment should primarily focus upon the west side of the 1700-1900 blocks of SW Fillmore Street, as these blocks are the safest to remain in single-family residential use for the long-term.

- Housing strategies should primarily include:
  - Interior/exterior rehabilitation of many existing owner-occupied homes;
  - Exterior rehab of some renter-occupied homes;
  - Vacant lots with little potential to support new housing should be incorporated with adjacent properties to help alleviate blight amongst these areas.
  - Infill development for homeownership should take place primarily within the 1700-1900 blocks of SW Fillmore Street where the deterioration and vacancies are the greatest. New single-family units should meet the plan's design guidelines.
- Infrastructure improvements would include construction of concrete alleys and sidewalks, curb/gutter repair, mill and overlay of asphalt streets and potential installation of additional street lighting.



*Left: View of the Kansas Expocentre from a vacant lot along the 1800 block of SW Fillmore Street. Right: A house stands empty at the intersection of SW 18<sup>th</sup> & Fillmore Street, and to the rear of the house is an unimproved lot used for overflow parking for events at the Kansas Expocentre facilities. These pictures show just how significant the presence of the Expocentre is within the eastern half of Chesney Park neighborhood.*

## Summary of Target Area Findings

- The most important assets to protect or build off of are “Chesney Park”, SW Washburn Avenue and Washburn University, the Red Cross property, SW 17<sup>th</sup> Street, and the southwest quadrant of the neighborhood (in no particular order). Any strategy to invest public funds should go towards protecting one or more of these assets.
- The Northwest target area is a major disconnect between two areas of strength (southwest quadrant of neighborhood, College Hill redevelopment), a potential area of strength (Central Park target area), and an anchor (“Chesney Park”) that has a regional image corridor at its boundary (17<sup>th</sup> Street).
- A good number of homes have been converted into apartments in the Northwest target area limiting potential for new homeowners unless there is a strong program to reduce the number of converted units. Strong homeownership levels exist just south of the Northwest target area making those blocks ideal to leverage homeowner re-investment as a spin-off effect.
- The number of substantially deteriorated and vacant homes in the 1700 block of SW Lincoln Street, as well as parts of the 1700 block of SW Buchanan Street near the American Red Cross, suggest that more intervention is needed for infill housing rather than just rehabilitation of existing homes. Land clearance and acquisition to facilitate infill housing is the only way to stabilize and reverse the downward spiraling conditions of these blocks. This should be done in combination with some rehabilitation of existing homes. Rehabilitation alone will not produce the type of change or have the ripple effect that is needed in these areas to transform the neighborhood.
- The Northwest target area should be considered the highest priority area for housing and infrastructure investment, but the Clay Street target area should be considered as the next highest priority for targeting **IF** funding remains or the infill redevelopment approach cannot be fully implemented in the 1700 blocks of Lincoln and Buchanan.
- The 1800 blocks of SW Lincoln, Buchanan, and Clay should be included as a high priority for rehabilitation targeting **IF** the infill redevelopment approach is implemented in the 1700 blocks of Lincoln and Buchanan.
- SW Clay Street target area exhibits a high concentration of unconverted single-family homes representing the best potential for new homeownership opportunities with rehab and infrastructure improvements. The concentration of deteriorated homes is one of the highest in the neighborhood – rehabbing should be the preferred choice of improvement as opposed to demolition and infill, in order to promote historic character

assets. The 1800 block may be more appropriate for spot demolition and infill.

- As an interior corridor, SW Clay Street target area lacks the power to transform the image of the neighborhood and community outside of the neighborhood.
- A linear target area focusing on one street, such as SW Fillmore or SW Clay Street, has limited potential spin-off effects on adjacent streets because of its back-to-back relationship.
- SW Fillmore Street is somewhat isolated from “residential” strengths and is further undermined by land use incompatibility issues to the east of it. It has suffered the most deterioration – as is evidence by the high number of vacant lots. Public investment should be conservative unless done as a large-scale investment.

## C. NEIGHBORHOOD-WIDE STRATEGIES

The following recommendations will expand upon the **Target Area Strategies** previously discussed in the Plan to include the remainder of the neighborhood. Strategies related to citizen participation, neighborhood character and image, infrastructure, community facilities and safety are all critical to an environment of livability that emphasizes a traditional neighborhood quality of life. These strategies can add significant value to the “demand-side” of the neighborhood and are discussed in greater detail in the following pages.

### 1. HOUSING

When City funds are used, priority investments into housing rehabilitation should be focused in the areas outlined in the **Target Area Strategies** section previously recommended in the Plan. Upgrading houses in a randomly dispersed pattern only dilutes the impact upon the neighborhood and will not lead to any spin-off effect in nearby blocks. The following programs are administered with federal funds through the Housing and Neighborhood Department (HND) of the City of Topeka on an income-eligible basis for low/moderate income households:

- **Major Rehabilitation** - This HND program is primarily intended for owner-occupied properties in need of interior and exterior repairs within selected target areas. However, up to thirty percent may be set aside for the rehabilitation of rental properties subject to selection by an RFP process. Funds may also be provided to assist with lead-paint controls and weatherproofing.
- **Exterior Rehabilitation** - This is primarily intended for owner and renter-occupied housing units that need significant exterior repairs of the existing structure. The assistance, however, may be available to properties that have documented historic significance and are in need of exterior repairs. Funds may be provided to assist with lead-paint controls as well.
- **Emergency Repairs** - Emergency home repair assistance (primarily repairs that are of an immediate health or safety nature) can be provided for low income owner-occupants throughout the neighborhood. This assistance is intended for higher cost, major emergency repairs. Minor maintenance and repairs remain the primary responsibility of the homeowner.
- **Accessibility Modifications** - This assistance is available to persons with disabilities throughout the City, whether they are owner-occupants or tenants. This assistance is intended to provide access into and out of the home. The priority is to build exterior ramps, widen doorways, and provide thresholds.

- **KDOC Affordable Housing** - This program is a cooperative venture with the Kansas Department of Corrections, in which KDOC provides women inmates, tools and equipment to form two crews for the rehabilitation of affordable housing units and sidewalk improvements.
- **Voluntary Demolition** – Assistance may be provided for the demolition of substantially deteriorated and vacant structures. The intent is to remove blighted structures that are beyond feasible repair (i.e. the cost to rehabilitate is more than 30% of the replacement value). For those structures that are privately owned, the City may institute a method of repayment for the demolition services provided, yet would not gain ownership of the property in question.

The use of federal funds for the purpose of demolishing structures may not be available if the State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO) determines that the structure could contribute to a potential historic district for listing on the National Register. The consulting parties will be required to agree upon ways to avoid, minimize, or mitigate potential adverse effects if the project is to continue. A survey of the affected blocks could be performed by city planning staff in cooperation with the SHPO to determine their potential of a district. If the area is deemed not worthy of a district nomination, then the demolitions could proceed.

If the survey shows that the area is district-worthy, then it is recommended that HND pursue steps with SHPO to sign a memorandum of agreement that will allow some selected demolitions to occur provided that other historical goals are advanced through mitigation. Some mitigation measures include surveying the historic character of the neighborhood, documentation of properties to be demolished, more sensitive rehabilitation methods for windows, porches, siding, etc. by the City and others as deemed appropriate by SHPO.

- **Infill Development** - There are several infill development opportunities in the neighborhood, as previously discussed in the **Target Area Strategies** section. Funds can be used to facilitate and support housing development by providing infrastructure development, land acquisition, clearance, demolition, site development, housing construction, soft-second mortgages, closing cost assistance and construction-related associated costs.

Acquisition of larger infill opportunity areas (e.g. SW Fillmore target area) should be explored through the City. The land could be held and marketed for development at a future date that adheres to the objectives of the Plan. Demolition and re-construction will need to be coordinated through HND in order to ensure expenditures follow federal regulations.

### **Additional Housing Considerations...**

- **Lot Expansions** – Opportunities for the City to acquire and demolish unoccupied and substandard homes, or vacant lots with little potential to support new housing should be offered to adjoining property owners who participate in the major rehabilitation program within the target areas. Lot expansions could also be useful within other infill opportunity areas. This would help to remove vacant and blighted homes that reside on small lots and have very little potential of being successfully inhabited for the long-term.
- **TOTO-II** - Assistance is provided as a 2nd mortgage, deferred loan subsidizing the purchase and rehab costs of a home for families at or below 80% of median income. While the program is available Citywide, it is structured to encourage home purchases in at-risk and intensive care areas. Homeownership and debt counseling assistance are provided by **Housing and Credit Counseling Inc.** Lending institutions participate by managing the maintenance escrow.
- **Conversions to Single-Family Use** - Where possible, a Rental Conversion Program should be used to acquire, rehabilitate and convert vacant rental properties into renovated homes, which will then be offered to homeowner occupants. In cases where large single-family structures have been divided into apartment units, the costs to re-convert and rehabilitate those structures may be higher than average. It is recommended that the City voluntarily acquire such properties as part of a major rehab program, convert them to single-family units and then offer the home for purchase by a homeowner much like an infill development.
- **Neighborhood Revitalization Program** - The City offers 10 year 95% property tax rebates for improvements that increase the value of the property by more than 10%. The rebate period can be extended up to 15 years for historic landmark properties. Improvements must be consistent with the adopted design guidelines for the neighborhood. The City's Planning Department administers the program.
- **Design Guidelines** (see “**Neighborhood Design Guidelines below**”).

## **2. NEIGHBORHOOD DESIGN GUIDELINES**

Much of the original character of housing in the target areas have been altered appreciably by time and insensitive repairs. The neighborhood, however, still has enough unique and diverse historic housing styles that can set it apart and give it a competitive advantage over other areas of the City if preserved or reflected in new construction. In order to combat these negative trends, it is recommended that city-funded rehabilitation and infill projects be sensitive to character-defining features of the Chesney Park neighborhood by following design guidelines.

**Design Guidelines for Rehabilitation** – Given the traditional character of the housing stock in the neighborhood, a set of design guidelines are important to ensure that the rehabilitation of existing homes is sensitive to the original character in size, scale, form and detail so that they fit well with their surroundings. Doing so will do several things: 1) it will give homes a competitive advantage when marketing, 2) it will ultimately increase re-sale or property values, including surrounding homes, 3) it will lead to more pride in the neighborhood and young homeowners, and 4) it will help the city comply with federal regulations when utilizing CDBG funding for rehabilitation. Inherent historic features of the existing housing stock should dictate such guidelines. Historic rehabilitation projects should work to protect and restore the characteristics of the housing types outlined in the next page; however, it is not a comprehensive guide for rehabilitation. The images on the next page are examples of architectural characteristics found in the Chesney Park neighborhood.

Please reference the next page for examples of **design guidelines for rehabilitation** .

**Design Guidelines for Infill Housing** - New housing development should maintain high-quality standards that compliment the traditional and historic characteristics of the neighborhood as previously identified. Based upon these characteristics, as well as upon input gathered from stakeholder interviews, it is recommended that new infill homes have the following characteristics:

- Primarily 2 stories.
- A functional front porch with sturdy looking columns and bases.
- Proportionate window to wall space.
- At least one front-gable roof pitch of 7/12 or more is ideal.
- Raised foundation.
- Consistent setbacks based upon the existing front yard setbacks of other homes within the block in order to retain a cohesive identity.
- Garages (attached or detached depending upon lot size) should be placed to the rear of the house and should be very clearly subordinate to the principal structure.
- Where alleys are present, it is recommended that garage access be taken from the rear of the lot or from a side street if it is a corner lot.
- Lap siding with similar spacing to traditional homes. Vinyl siding is acceptable; however, manufactured hardiplank siding is often used and matches better with older homes.
- Trim detailing.

Please reference [page 52](#) for examples of **Single-Family** and **Multi-Family Design Prototypes**.

## Architectural Characteristics of Chesney Park Housing

	Housing Type	Characteristics (Typical)
	<p><b>Folk Victorian (1870-1910)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 2 ½ story cross gable front</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Steep, irregular shaped roof</li> <li>▪ Broad front porch</li> <li>▪ Asymmetrical façade</li> <li>▪ Textured shingle siding</li> <li>▪ Trim detailing</li> <li>▪ Detailed spindle work</li> <li>▪ Detached garage in rear</li> </ul>
	<p><b>Homestead / Bungalow (1900-20)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 2 ½ story side-gabled built to fit narrow lot</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Simple rectangular shape</li> <li>▪ Front-gabled roof</li> <li>▪ Columned front porch – columns wider at bottom than top</li> <li>▪ Multiple roof lines</li> <li>▪ Trim detailing</li> <li>▪ Re-glazed original windows with storm fronts.</li> <li>▪ Lap siding (not vinyl)</li> </ul>
	<p><b>Bungalow (1910-25)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1 ½ story gable front on narrow lot</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Short, vertical profile</li> <li>▪ Front porch with columns that taper out and low profile painted railings</li> <li>▪ Brick column bases</li> <li>▪ Raised foundation</li> <li>▪ Multiple roof lines</li> <li>▪ No vinyl siding</li> <li>▪ Re-glazed original windows with storm fronts</li> </ul>
	<p><b>Georgian Colonial (1720-1780)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1 ½ story gable front on narrow lot</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Square, symmetrical shape</li> <li>▪ Central front door, straight line of windows on 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> floors</li> <li>▪ Brick construction</li> <li>▪ Multiple, large chimneys</li> </ul>

## Single/Two Family Design Prototypes

1.



2.



3.



4.



## Multi-Family Design Prototypes

5.



6.



7.



8.



Images 1-3 in the previous page are infill design examples that are appropriate for most areas of the neighborhood. Image 1 is an infill housing unit located in the Tennessee Town neighborhood; notice the side-entry garage. Image 2, also within the Tennessee Town neighborhood, has a traditional housing design and is appropriate within the Chesney Park neighborhood, while a house with a front-entrance garage such as found in Image 3 would be appropriate for a block without alleys. Image 4 is a Cornerstone duplex in the Ward Meade neighborhood that embodies most of the appropriate design features for a low-density neighborhood despite not having a raised foundation.

Images 5 & 6 are of apartment units in the Old Town and Tennessee Town neighborhoods respectively, and each design would be appropriate within Chesney Park. Image 7 is a quad-plex with a very traditional architectural character. Image 8 is another affordable multiple-family apartment structure that would be appropriate within the Chesney Park neighborhood.

**Design Guidelines for Image Corridors** - These guidelines particularly apply to areas along SW 17<sup>th</sup> Street and SW Washburn Avenue where higher-intensity residential/office/commercial land uses might possibly front image corridors and back-up to established single-family areas of historic character. These guidelines will not only establish these areas as a transition between high and low-intensity land uses, but they will also prevent “strip” characteristics that are commonly found along arterial streets and areas of suburban development, which would not be appropriate adjacent to areas with traditional neighborhood development.

- All buildings should be residential in appearance, or at least match the characteristics of traditional neighborhood development that is evident in parts of the area (reference the images below for examples).
- Monolithic structures with long, unbroken wall planes, surfaces, and roof planes are discouraged. Pitched roofs are preferred for single buildings. Traditional materials are also encouraged such as stone, brick, and siding spaced similar to nearby homes.
- Multiple story buildings should step-down in height the closer they get to the single-family residential neighborhood and should not be higher than two to three stories (42') at the front or rear setback line.

- Buildings should minimize front setbacks from the street based upon the existing setbacks of other buildings within the block in order to retain a cohesive street edge.
- Buildings should be placed as close to the street edge as possible while still allowing adequate space for sidewalks and pedestrian activity.
- Parking lots should not dominate street frontages and should be placed behind or to the side of the principle structure.

**Preferred**



*Where viable, low-density land uses should be maintained on the edges of the neighborhood to better reflect the neighborhood's overall single-family character and image. The 1800 block of SW Washburn Avenue is a good example of single-family homes that leave a positive impression of both the neighborhood and Washburn University. Access to single-family properties that front arterial streets should primarily be from alleys or local streets to minimize vehicular conflict points.*

**Preferred / Not Preferred**



*The commercial building to the left is an existing structure in the neighborhood along SW 17<sup>th</sup> Street. It has a well-maintained property and incorporates some landscaping. However, its warehouse appearance and flat roof does not blend with the traditional character of the neighborhood.*



**Preferred / Not Preferred**

*The Washburn Place apartment complex is a well-maintained structure that serves its purpose*

*of rental housing for students of the University and does show some façade articulation. However, the parking lot dominates the façade of the building along a major arterial and the building is setback farther than other buildings.*

**Preferred**



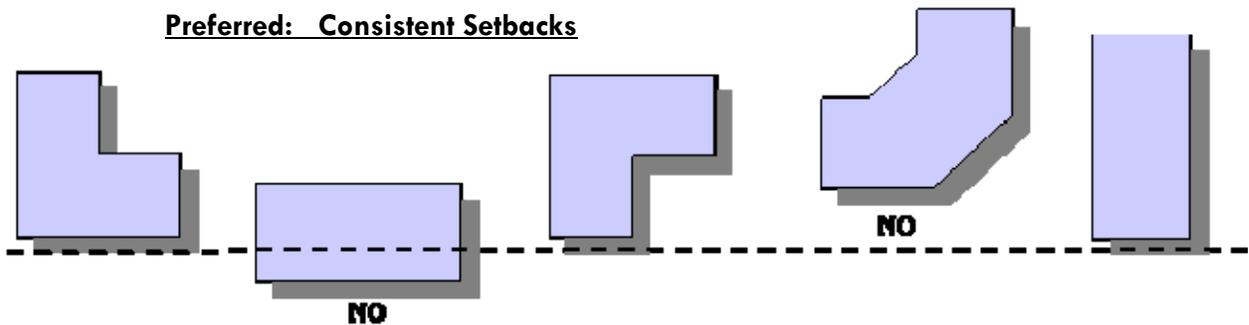
*Incorporating a mix of uses such as ground-floor office/retail units with residential living space in the upper-levels is a characteristic of many historic buildings and can enable a structure to better fit within the context of a traditional neighborhood setting.*

**Preferred: Building Height Transition**



*Buildings adjacent to single-family homes should transition to lower heights in order to establish a more clear separation between medium and low-intensity development in the neighborhood.*

**Preferred: Consistent Setbacks**



*Consistent front setbacks are important in order to retain a coherent visual identity along the neighborhood's borders. Buildings set close to the street also provide visual interest with ground-floor uses such as shops with storefront display windows and provide an environment that is more suitable for pedestrian activities than automobile-oriented development.*

**Historic Designations** - There are no individual properties in the neighborhood listed on the **National Register of Historic Places** or as a **Local Landmark**. Furthermore, there does not appear to be a critical mass of significantly historic properties to warrant a *Historic District* designation. The one exception to this may be the southwest quadrant of the neighborhood or the homes around the park; the park is the pivotal reason why the neighborhood was founded. Listing on a state or national register carries significant tax benefits for property owners who make improvements consistent with historic design guidelines. A survey of the affected blocks could be performed by city planning staff in cooperation with the State Historic Preservation Office to determine potential of a district.

As an alternative, a Local Historic Landmarks designation should be utilized. This is a program started by the Topeka Landmarks Commission that recognizes individual properties as well as districts that have historic architectural or cultural significance. It is a voluntary designation and does not affect surrounding properties. This designation is applied as an overlay zoning district and can only be approved or removed through the City's zoning procedures.

**Conservation Overlay/Traditional Neighborhood Design (TND) Zoning District** - The purpose of the conservation overlay district is to ensure that new development along the neighborhood's perimeter – primarily SW 17<sup>th</sup> Street and SW Washburn Avenue - maintains a residential or traditional neighborhood appearance, which is critical to the overall image of Chesney Park as well as Washburn University. Conservation overlay districts are an additional set of design regulations for new construction above and beyond the existing base zoning district that require the massing, orientation, setbacks, form, access, etc. to be consistent with the character of the neighborhood. Such an overlay district needs to be adopted by the City Council and should follow the **Design Guidelines** found in this Plan.

**Technical Assistance for Repairs (Internet/Video)** - Most insensitive rehabilitation jobs are done due to lack of knowledge of appropriate methods or materials on older homes. Good design does not necessarily equate to higher renovation costs. If done right, historically appropriate repairs will ultimately increase the value of their property and the neighborhood. For example, some old home renovations replace original sash cord windows with smaller vinyl windows never thinking that they could save money through replacement of sash cords, weather-stripping, glazing, and insulation around window frames (all do-it-yourself-type jobs). Original wood windows have longer life because of better wood and can be energy efficient with adequate storm windows. Many visual repair demonstrations are now documented on internet sites, including You Tube and the State Historic Preservation Office. Having neighbors share handouts, videos, or web-site links with each other at NIA meetings creates a trusted knowledge base so that questions can be answered from first-hand experience.

### 3. INFRASTRUCTURE & CIRCULATION

**Basic Infrastructure** - Target areas for housing should be the first priority for upgrading the following basic infrastructure and restore public confidence in the Chesney Park neighborhood:

- **Alleys** – Many of the alleys in the neighborhood have never been paved, and those that have are now in very poor condition. While several alleys have been constructed behind SW Washburn Avenue, there are many more that need repair, which will improve circulation, drainage, and image. Alleys should be re-done in all affected target areas.
- **Sidewalks** – Most brick sidewalks are not in good condition and should be replaced with concrete. Old and unsafe concrete sidewalks should be replaced. Sidewalks should be redone starting in the target areas and heading south from 17<sup>th</sup> to 21<sup>st</sup> Street to the greatest extent possible. New concrete sidewalks should be placed on east-west streets to improve circulation with 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> Streets being the priorities since they lead to the park.
- **Curbing** - The old limestone curbing should be preserved wherever possible, yet only if in good condition. Where replacement curbing is required because of deterioration or height, concrete should be used and built in order to retain a consistent curb height, which is more suitable for modern uses. Replacement should begin in the target area and expand south with the sidewalks as funding allows.
- **Streets** - Mill and overlay of streets that are in poor condition will be necessary for all areas of the neighborhood. Brick streets are often an important part of a historic neighborhood and should be preserved on SW Buchanan since they appear to be in good condition.

**SW 17th Street** - SW 17th Street from SW Washburn Avenue to SW Topeka Boulevard is an important image corridor within the City of Topeka as motorists use this thoroughfare to get to Washburn University and to other core areas of the city. In its current state, however, SW 17<sup>th</sup> Street does not leave a high quality impression due to the presence of deteriorating and vacant homes, empty storefronts, and unkempt yards that are visible along this important corridor. Chesney Park shares this portion of the street with the Central Park neighborhood. This is a negative for both the neighborhoods, the University, and for the overall impression of the City of Topeka. Several options are recommended to transform this vital image corridor into an asset for the neighborhood and city alike.

## Existing Conditions



*Stark landscaping along SW 17<sup>th</sup> Street, particularly below the overhead power lines contribute to a dreary and unimpressive streetscape. Additional trees could be planted between the sidewalk and the curb under power lines where none exist currently. The trees should be appropriate so as not to interfere with the overhead lines.*

## Proposed Elements

- ✓ **Option #1: Landscaped Medians.** Raised landscaped medians in the turn lane of SW 17<sup>th</sup> Street will create added visual appeal and will improve safety for motorists and pedestrians by preventing illegal passing in the left turn lane. It will also reduce noise for properties that front the street as well. The image to the left on the next page is an example median within the Old Town neighborhood along SW 8<sup>th</sup> Street in Topeka, while the image to the right shows how medians can be designed to retain several stacking spaces for cars to make left turns onto the local streets to ensure traffic flow.

Medians should extend along designated stretches of SW 17<sup>th</sup> Street from SW Washburn Avenue to SW Topeka Boulevard and may restrict left turns from alleys in certain locations. The City's traffic engineer recommends that left turn movements remain open at SW Lincoln, Clay, and Western Avenue. This option can be completed all within the current right-of-way of SW 17<sup>th</sup> Street since no parking is allowed.



*Raised landscaped median examples for SW 17<sup>th</sup> Street.*

- ✓ **Option #2: Landscaped Medians with Bike Lanes.** In addition to option #1, this option would add bike lanes to improve accessibility within the neighborhood and provide an important link between Washburn University, the Kansas Expo Centre, the Landon Trail and Shunga Trail, and possibly even the Great Mural Wall near SW 20<sup>th</sup> & Western Avenue. This would also greatly increase the visibility of the area, thereby changing the image of the neighborhood and creating synergy between these important destinations within the City.



This could also be achieved all within the current right-of-way along SW 17<sup>th</sup> Street, but any landscaping between the sidewalk and the curb would likely be lost. A major obstacle to this option is the presence of overhead power lines and poles that exist on the south side of the street. These utilities would need to be placed underground before this option can be implemented.

The two images on the next page from the Oregon Department of Transportation illustrate the idea of “Complete Streets”, which are streets designed to be safe and accessible for all users, including pedestrians and cyclists. Notice some of the details of this potential retrofit: tree-lined street, landscaped median in the turn lane, underground utilities to reduce visual clutter, bike lanes, and wider sidewalks. Also notice that the left turning lanes are still usable and little to no property was acquired for additional right-of-way. The images on the next page are a model for re-inventing SW 17<sup>th</sup> Street and for beautifying a very important corridor within the City of Topeka.

**Before**



**After**



- ✓ **Option #3: SW 17<sup>th</sup> Street Greenway.** Options # 1 and 2 could be combined with a larger-scale alternative for improving the SW 17<sup>th</sup> Street corridor by acquiring property on either side of the street for additional right-of-way. The additional space for public use could allow for the creation of 10' sidewalks that bend and meander along the street, decorative lighting, and street trees. This would have the effect of creating a larger open space for pedestrians, walking enthusiasts, and nearby residents. This would also have the benefit of clearing blighted housing near or adjacent to the street that do not have strong potential to be renovated or successfully occupied in the future. Implementing a plan such as this would require significant public investment and cooperation among affected property owners. Also, unless streets are closed, the linear greenway “effect” would be minimized to a great extent thereby reducing the cost-benefit ratio significantly. This more ambitious idea would require a great deal of public support to implement.



*Illustration of Greenway along SW 17<sup>th</sup> Street with expanded sidewalks, greater open space between the street and neighboring properties, landscaped medians, and decorative street lighting.*

Other elements that should be considered along with these 3 options include:

- **Decorative / Pedestrian Lighting** - As part of the effort to improve the safety and image of the neighborhood, decorative street lights should be installed along major image corridors. A priority location should be along SW 17<sup>th</sup> Street; lighting along SW Washburn Avenue should be used as an example. Decorative street lights should be appropriate for a residential neighborhood and thus should not be too tall or too bright. **Important note:** while decorative/pedestrian street lighting could be added to any of the options stated above, a funding source to operate and maintain the lights is currently not identified by the City.
- **Underground Utilities** - Utility lines should be placed underground in order to remove visual clutter in the neighborhood and reduce the risk of power outages. Placing utility lines underground, however, will require significant public and private investment and may be cost prohibitive. As mentioned previously, the expansion of right-of-way for either bike lanes or a greenway will depend upon placing the utilities underground.



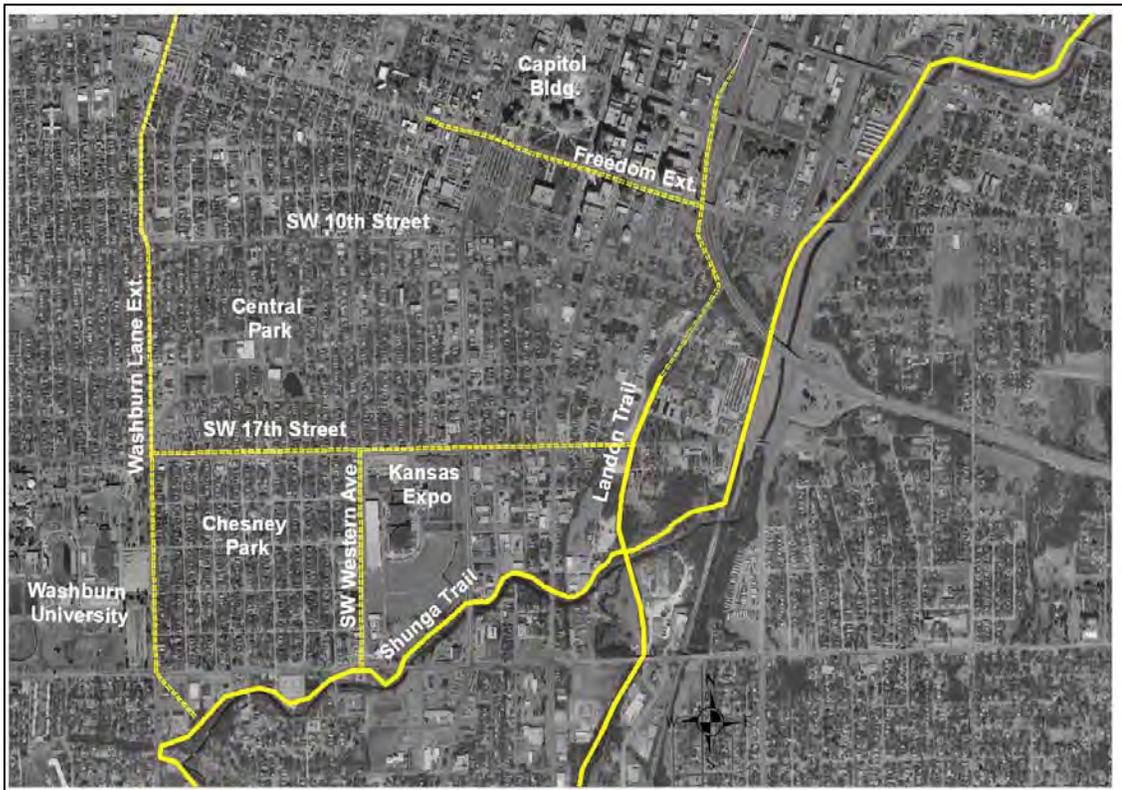
## 4. TRAILS

**Shunga Trail Connection (SW 21<sup>st</sup> Street & Great Mural Wall)-** A connection should be made between the Shunga Trail and the commercial business area near the intersection of SW 21<sup>st</sup> Street and Topeka Boulevard. Currently, pedestrians and bicyclists using this route have to cross either of these two arterial streets in order to access the businesses at this location because there is no direct connection to this corner of the block from the Trail itself.

A connection to the north side of SW 21<sup>st</sup> Street from the Shunga Trail, as seen in the picture to the left on the next page would solve this obstruction and could possibly even attract more business to the shops located behind the Harley Davidson building. In addition, the trail should extend along SW Western Avenue past the Great Mural Wall and on to SW 17<sup>th</sup> Street. While a bike lane could be included along SW Western Avenue, constructing a sidewalk along the east side of the street has been identified as an important priority as well.



*The picture at left shows the Shunga Trail as it crosses beneath SW 21<sup>st</sup> Street on its way past the Expocentre and the commercial business area. Currently, there is no connection to the commercial business area to the Trail because it is divided by the creek.*



*The illustration above shows some of the established trails that cut across Central Topeka areas and some of the potential destination spots, such as the Kansas Expocentre, Washburn University, Central Park, and the Capitol Building. The potential bike lanes along SW Washburn Ave, 17<sup>th</sup> Street and Western Avenue would form a loop with the campus and existing trails. Proposed bike lanes/routes are illustrated with dashed lines.*

## 5. COMMUNITY BUILDING

Community Building is a key part of a neighborhood revitalization strategy because its focus is on making the neighborhood a stronger advocate for itself. Empowering the residents and institutions of a neighborhood with the notion that they can foster change that impacts the neighborhood in a positive manner is one of the goals of community building. Two aspects of community building – organizing & public safety – are explored below to help create a better sense of community.

**Organizing** - Successful organizations have the wherewithal to succeed. A neighborhood's ability to complete a competitive grant application, run successful meetings that are open to all residents of the neighborhood, and complete projects in a timely manner demonstrates to decision makers and funding organizations that the neighborhood is serious about getting things done. Ideally, the neighborhood should function like a business. Below are strategies to increase organizational capacity:

- **Neighborhood Improvement Association & Action Team Meetings:** The City supports regularly scheduled meetings between neighborhood improvement association officers and citizens to increase awareness in the neighborhood. The Chesney Park NIA should continue to hold weekly Action Team meetings in order to keep residents and other stakeholders of the neighborhood informed.
- **Neighborhood Empowerment Initiative:** This grant program through the City of Topeka funds public facility and infrastructure projects. The grants will encourage a match by the neighborhood organization or a match generated in the form of volunteer labor. NIA's that are currently receiving target area assistance (i.e., Chesney Park and Ward Meade for the years 2010 & 2011) are not eligible for this program. The final allocations of these project funds are made by the City Council.
- **Education and training:** NIA leaders should consider attending seminars and conferences that deal with community building, neighborhood revitalization and other community issues. As an example, **Neighborhoods USA** holds an annual conference and the **Neighborhood Reinvestment Training Institute** conducts a number of training conferences every year as well. It is recommended that the NIA and City explore ways to encourage neighborhood leaders to attend.
- **Strength in numbers:** When opportunities present themselves for the neighborhood to appear before decision makers, the neighborhood must be able to demonstrate a unified voice with a large number of people. The NIA's monthly newsletter is currently used as a way to rally supporters and to notify residents of activities taking place in the neighborhood.

- **Social activities:** Fun activities that bring neighbors together are an important element of a strong neighborhood. Fourth of July block parties bring neighbors together, as well as other events such as pancake feeds, potlucks, and neighborhood socials with live music and games held at the Park. The neighborhood also participates in “National Night Out”, which is a block party designed to heighten drug and crime prevention awareness in the neighborhood. Summer programs in the park, the Mural Wall project, as well as classes with the Professional Martial Arts studio are a great way for youth to get involved in the neighborhood.
- **Collaborate to form partnerships:** The NIA has achieved a strong working relationship with the University of Washburn, local businesses such as Professional Martial Arts, the Kansas Expocentre, and other local agencies such as the American Red Cross.
- **Marketing:** The targeting of the Chesney Park and Ward Meade neighborhoods for federal and municipal investment during 2010 – 2011 represents a unique opportunity to market and advertise the successes and future potential of these areas. Both neighborhoods should examine the feasibility of a dual public relations campaign to realtors in order to attract new owner-occupants and private investment. If implemented, this public relations campaign would leverage local media and include advertising in local and national magazines as well as media placement upon highway billboards.

**Public Safety** - A major goal of this Plan is to create a safe, clean and livable environment for all residents of Chesney Park to live, learn, work and play. A crime problem is a multifaceted issue. There is no magic solution that is going to erase the occurrence or even the perception of crime within the community. Implementing the revitalization strategies described previously will go a long way towards making the neighborhood safer for residents of the area. In the short-term, however, here are a few programs and activities that citizens can do to reverse the negative cycle of crime and begin to reclaim their neighborhood.

- **Citizen Patrols:** The neighborhood should continue public safety activities such as “Stroll Patrols” that put more “eyes” on the street and discourage crime from happening in the area. The Chesney Park NIA is active in the **Citizen Patrol Coalition** of Topeka-Shawnee County to assist law enforcement in their fight against neighborhood crime, and residents can apply to become members. The desired effect of Citizen Patrol is to increase the cooperation of private citizens with law enforcement to watch, record, and report crime throughout the Chesney Park neighborhood.
- **Weed and Seed:** Chesney Park has been a part of the City of Topeka’s Weed and Seed boundary. This is a collaborative, participatory community development program between the City of Topeka and the U.S. Department of Justice. The program seeks to

“weed” out crime and “seed” neighborhood revitalization. The program focuses community and City resources to empower neighborhood residents and promote positive long term change. The Weed and Seed strategy combines four elements: law enforcement, community policing, prevention/intervention/treatment services and neighborhood restoration. Chesney Park is in the final year of funding for this grant, but the neighborhood should continue using the tools of the program and to find other sources of funding to help combat crime in the neighborhood.

- **Westar Energy Inc.**, furthermore, will pay for the installation of standard street lights within low/moderate income neighborhoods for individual homeowners who are then required to pay the electricity costs (approximately \$12-20/month).
- **Crime Prevention through Environmental Design (CPTED):** Safe Streets and the Police Department can help the neighborhood determine which property configurations discourage criminal activity. For example, the “5 & 2” rule states that trees should be trimmed to at least five feet high and bushes should be trimmed so that they are no higher than two feet tall as well.
- **Crime Free Multi-Housing Program:** The Topeka Police Department, Safe Streets and the City’s Code Compliance department have teamed up to provide landlords with free education in keeping their tenants safe and preventing crimes against their properties. The program uses a three-step process to help landlords and property managers make their units secure, prevent and identify drug operators, screen tenants effectively and learn about liability laws. The three steps landlords must take to earn certification as a Crime Free Multi-Housing property are to complete the eight-hour class, have a property inspection by code compliance services and police, as well as conduct a “Safety Social” for residents of the rental property at least once a year.
- **Neighbor to Neighbor Volunteers:** The “broken windows” theory states that the presence of even the slightest traces of neglected property such as broken windows can cause a ripple effect in which other adjacent property owners lose confidence in the neighborhood or where criminals begin to prey upon areas that “don’t care.”

This can be prevented through volunteer “neighbor to neighbor” programs that address smaller housing maintenance issues – painting, porches, gutters, etc. – that prolong the life of the existing housing stock and prevent the “broken windows” cycle. The NIA could also utilize existing volunteer rehab programs such as **Rebuilding Together** in order to accomplish the same purpose. Local businesses, churches and individuals donate money for materials used to repair homes for elderly residents who cannot afford to make the repairs themselves.

- **Tree Trimming:** Overgrowth of trees and lawn vegetation leads to an untidy appearance that detracts from the value of the housing, blocks light and can even prevent grass from growing. Vacant homes and empty lots such as the one pictured below in the 1700 block of SW Buchanan Street are particularly susceptible to overgrown vegetation, which can also perpetuate criminal activity from a lack of natural surveillance of defensible space. If nothing else, trimming back trees and vegetation would make considerable difference in appeal and safety. Until a larger contingent of owner-occupied properties exist, it will be necessary to work with the City arborist and property owners to undertake major neighborhood “trim-ups” on a yearly basis.



- **Code Enforcement:** Enforcement of housing, zoning, and environmental codes is an ongoing city-wide program that is used to assure a minimum level of maintenance and compatible uses of properties occur. In light of the high number of conversions and absentee landlords in the neighborhood, the enforcement of these codes can be an effective tool when combined with programs that encourage owners to participate in the rehabilitation process.

## 6. OTHER

**“Chesney Park”** – The Park is a great local asset that is the host to many neighborhood activities. As outlined in the **Target Area Strategies**, the Park should be protected from any nearby deteriorating housing conditions as this is one of the most visible and important areas within the neighborhood. Summer youth programs in the Park should continue to be supported. Through the Empowerment Grant, skateboarding in the Park is now possible as well. The neighborhood is also seeking ways to install wi-fi internet in the park in order to attract students and other desirable people to the area.



**Expocentre Parking** - The empty lot at SW 18<sup>th</sup> Street and Western Avenue is often used as an overflow parking lot and temporary stables for activities at the Maner Conference Center and livestock pavilions. This area should be improved with paved parking, fencing, landscaping and sidewalks to be most compatible with nearby residential uses.



**Great Mural Wall & Interpretation Signs** – The neighborhood and the City should continue to support the development of the Great Mural Wall located at SW 20<sup>th</sup> Street & Western Avenue. Additionally, the neighborhood should support the installation of interpretation signs that discuss the development of the project itself and a short history of the surrounding environment. The project has been a collaborative effort between interested citizens, area businesses, Washburn University, Topeka High School, the City of Topeka, as well as the Central Park NIA and Elmhurst NA among others. The project celebrates the history of Central Topeka as well as the Midway Fairgrounds, which is now the current site of the Kansas Expocentre and livestock pavilion. As previously stated, there are now 180 feet of mural panels on the 900 foot wall, and when completed, it will be one of the longest murals in the United States.



**Neighborhood Identification Signs** – Visual cues for the neighborhood should also be considered to not only increase awareness of the neighborhood but to beautify the area as well. For example, small banners identifying the neighborhood could be attached to the decorative street lights along SW Washburn Avenue. A design should be developed for the banners that will include a butterfly image like the one shown below, which is the adopted logo for the neighborhood. These signs would be similar to those used for Washburn University, also shown below. The NIA has expressed a desire not to have monument-style ground signs identifying the neighborhood, such as the wrought-iron fencing used within the Central Park neighborhood. Also, new Wayfinding Signs that identify the Kansas Expocentre could also include the Great Mural Wall. Empowerment Grant funds could potentially be used for the banner signs, while other sources of funding will need to be considered for the Wayfinding Signs.



## V. IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY

*“Well done is better than well said.”*

**Ben Franklin**

After all that is written of what should be done, the reality is that it means nothing unless something is done. The implementation of the goals and strategies in the plan becomes the measuring stick for the success of a plan. The purpose of this section is to provide a “framework for action” that outlines how the community’s vision for Chesney Park can be realized over the next 10-15 years and the costs and responsibilities that may be incurred along the way. This section should be used by all stakeholders to guide their decision-making implementing the priorities of the Plan.

### A. KEY ACTION PRIORITIES

Listed below are priorities for implementing specific strategies and actions of this plan. They are not necessarily inclusive of all potential actions, but a checklist of some of the more major actions that should be undertaken. Priorities are based upon input from neighborhood stakeholders and City departments, with consideration given to priorities that have the greatest chance to succeed with a reasonable amount of available funding.

#### Priority “A” Activities (address these before all others)

- ✓ **Street paving.** Mill and overlay repairs for the Chesney Park neighborhood should be put into the City’s operating budget. If that does not happen, CIP funds targeted for neighborhood infrastructure should be used.
- ✓ **Sidewalk & curb repair/replacement.** These actions should be focused on those areas receiving housing rehabilitation assistance in order to concentrate revitalization efforts. East-west streets leading to the Park and within the target areas should be included. Infrastructure costs such as this are included in the CIP budget for target area assistance.
- ✓ **New alley construction.** These actions should be focused on those areas receiving housing rehabilitation assistance in order to concentrate revitalization efforts. Infrastructure costs such as this are included in the City’s CIP budget for target area assistance.
- ✓ **Historic surveys.** Along with the assistance of the State Historic Preservation Office, Planning staff should evaluate the historic significance of housing within Chesney Park. The highest priority should be within the target areas discussed previously. The conclusions of these evaluations will help to determine the proper path towards revitalization of the neighborhood (i.e. rehabilitation vs. select demolition/infill development).



- ✓ **New single-family housing along the 1700 blocks of SW Lincoln & Buchanan Street.** Houses that lack historic significance and are substantially deteriorated and/or lack viability for long-term success should be demolished and replaced with new single-family housing that meets the Plan's design guidelines. HND has several programs in place to help remove substantially deteriorated homes in low-income neighborhoods using the City's CDBG funds. Demolitions should be part of the comprehensive target area strategy.
- ✓ **Home rehabilitation program.** Begin targeting blocks for rehabilitation. Focusing on rehabilitation will improve the housing conditions in the neighborhood and make a big impact on overall revitalization. All rehabilitation projects should work to preserve the original size, scale, and detail of the structure.
- ✓ **Mural interpretation signs.** Interpretation signs next to the Great Mural Wall are being funded through the Empowerment grant awarded to this project in 2008.
- ✓ **Expocentre parking.** The NIA and Planning staff should work closely with Shawnee County to facilitate the improvement of the vacant lot at the intersection of SW 18<sup>th</sup> Street & Western Avenue. The use of the lot for horse shows is currently not in compliance with zoning or city parking standards.

**Priority "B" Activities (secondary, but still should be worked on)**

- ✓ **SW 17<sup>th</sup> Street streetscape improvements.** At least Option #1 (landscaped medians & pedestrian lighting) for improving SW 17<sup>th</sup> Street should be put into the City's CIP budget. The NIA should work closely with Public Works, Planning department, and adjacent property owners. Furthermore, meetings should take place to work on design issues with the neighborhoods involved. Although CIP dollars can be spent on the purchase of lighting fixtures, ongoing power and maintenance costs will need to be included in the City's operational budget.
- ✓ **Shunga Trail connection to Harley Davidson shops and Great Mural Wall.** This project can be funded through the City's CIP budget and/or through State Transportation matching funds.
- ✓ **Rezoning of specified properties.** Property located at 1700 SW Clay Street should be re-zoned from commercial to residential, which is the existing land use. Commercial zoning at this location should only be considered within a planned development setting. The need to initiate more aggressive re-zoning or down zoning should only be considered once the NIA petitions the Planning Commission or City Council for specific properties whose zoning is not conforming to the future land use plan.

**Priority “C” Activities (Hold off until more of A and B get accomplished)**

- ✓ **Neighborhood identification signs.** Small banner signs upon decorative pedestrian light poles identifying the neighborhood along SW Washburn Avenue (existing) and SW 17<sup>th</sup> Street (proposed) should be funded through the Empowerment grant rather than with CDBG funds.
- ✓ **Wayfinding signs.** Wayfinding signs that identify the Kansas Expocentre and the Great Mural Wall along SW Western Avenue will need to be considered within the City’s CIP budget during the next phase for installing these signs.
- ✓ **Wi-Fi internet.** The neighborhood should consult with Washburn University and the Kansas Expocentre to discuss ways in which to develop a wi-fi infrastructure network that will provide free or low-cost internet service to the neighborhood. This might include simply expanding existing services at these two locations and providing a greater range of connectivity to the networks. In other cities, non-profit organizations have taken the lead to build and provide wi-fi internet service to low-income communities.

**B. TARGET AREA PRIORITIES**

Potential housing and infrastructure cost estimates are based upon recommendations for the target areas outlined in the Plan and are illustrated in the Tables and Maps in Appendices A through E. The cost estimates and timelines are what **could** happen if funding is available.

- Housing costs represent anticipated subsidies from the City’s Consolidated Plan budget (CDBG/HOME) approved by City Council, but do not reflect any private dollars leveraged for that purpose.
- The cost estimates in the appendix are not a final budget. The final City-approved budget for these improvements will vary dependent upon a variety of factors including federal funding levels which change from year to year.
- It will not be feasible to complete all recommended housing improvements in a timely manner without, voluntary participation by affected property owners.
- The work to be completed may include private/not-for-profit sources.
- It is intended that one target area shall be substantially completed prior to moving on to the next target area.
- Infill housing is for homeownership only unless stated otherwise. The costs for new owner-occupied infill housing represent the total cost of construction which includes a portion of a City subsidy (e.g. soft second mortgage). Infill housing sponsored by the City typically averages two (2) units annually.
- Costs for infrastructure and parks reflect City-bonded capital costs from sources typically found within the City’s Capital Improvement Program (CIP).
- The list of assumptions may also be subject to change as well.

## Appendix A

<b>Chesney Park Neighborhood: 1700 Lane - Clay Street</b>							
<b>Primary Target Area 2010 &amp; 2011</b>	<b>ESTIMATES</b>			<b>PRIORITIES</b>			
	Costs	2010	2011	2012-2020	1-5 Years	6-10 Years	11+ Years
<b>Housing</b>							
Major Rehab (4 units 2010 & 2011)	\$	140,000	\$ 140,000				
Minor Rehab (3 units 2010 & 2011)	\$	36,000	\$ 36,000				
Acquisition & Demolition (4 units 2010 & 2011)	\$	170,000	\$ 170,000				
Infill Housing - Single Family (10 units)				\$ 1,000,000			
<b>Sub-Total</b>	<b>\$</b>	<b>346,000</b>	<b>\$ 346,000</b>	<b>\$ 1,000,000</b>			
<b>Infrastructure</b>							
<b>Curbs &amp; Gutters</b>							
Lane St.	\$	35,000					
Lincoln St.	\$	35,000					
Buchanan St.	\$	35,000					
Clay St.	\$	35,000					
<b>Sidewalks</b>							
Lane St.	\$	20,000					
Lincoln St.	\$	20,000					
18th Street	\$	30,000					
<b>Alleys</b>							
Between Lane & Lincoln St.	\$	80,000					
Between Clay & Central Park Ave.	\$	80,000					
<b>17th Street Landscaped Median</b>							
5 medians (Washburn Ave. to Topeka Blvd)				\$ 325,000			
<b>Mill &amp; Overlay</b>							
1700 blocks Lane - Clay St.	\$	80,000					
<b>Sub-Total</b>	<b>\$</b>	<b>450,000</b>	<b>\$ -</b>	<b>\$ 325,000</b>			
Design, Inspection, Contingency	\$	136,350	\$ -	\$ 99,125			
<b>Sub-Total</b>	<b>\$</b>	<b>586,350</b>	<b>\$ -</b>	<b>\$ 424,125</b>			
<b>Other</b>							
Decorative Street Lighting requires Gen Fund for utility costs. CIP for pole, light and installation							
Removal of Several Trees in ROW Park Forestry & Inmate crews							
<b>Total (estimate)</b>	<b>\$</b>	<b>932,350</b>	<b>\$ 346,000</b>	<b>\$ 1,424,125</b>			
			<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>\$ 2,702,475</b>			
<b>Additional Lighting</b>							
Standard Street Lights Monthly electrical charge includes light and installation charge							
Decorative Street Lights Monthly electrical charge per light plus upfront light and installation costs							
<b>Assumptions</b>							
Curb & Gutter (1 block, both sides) = \$35,000							
Sidewalks (1 block, 1 side) = \$20,000							
Alleys w/sewer = \$80,000 per block; w/o sewer = \$60,000							
Average Major Rehab = \$35,000/unit							
Average Minor Rehab = \$12,000/unit							
Average Acquisition = \$35,000/unit							
Average Demolition = \$6,500-\$9,200/unit							
Detached Single-Family Infill = \$100,000/unit							
Mill & Overlay (new asphalt layering)= \$7.50/square yard; average street 600 ft. in length, 24 ft. wide							

### Important Note:

These cost estimates provided for information purposes only and should not be relied on for future costs or as actual bids for future projects. Increases in materials, overhead and labor can change drastically in a short period of time. Funding is subject to availability, as provided by the federal government and City governing body and allocations change annually.

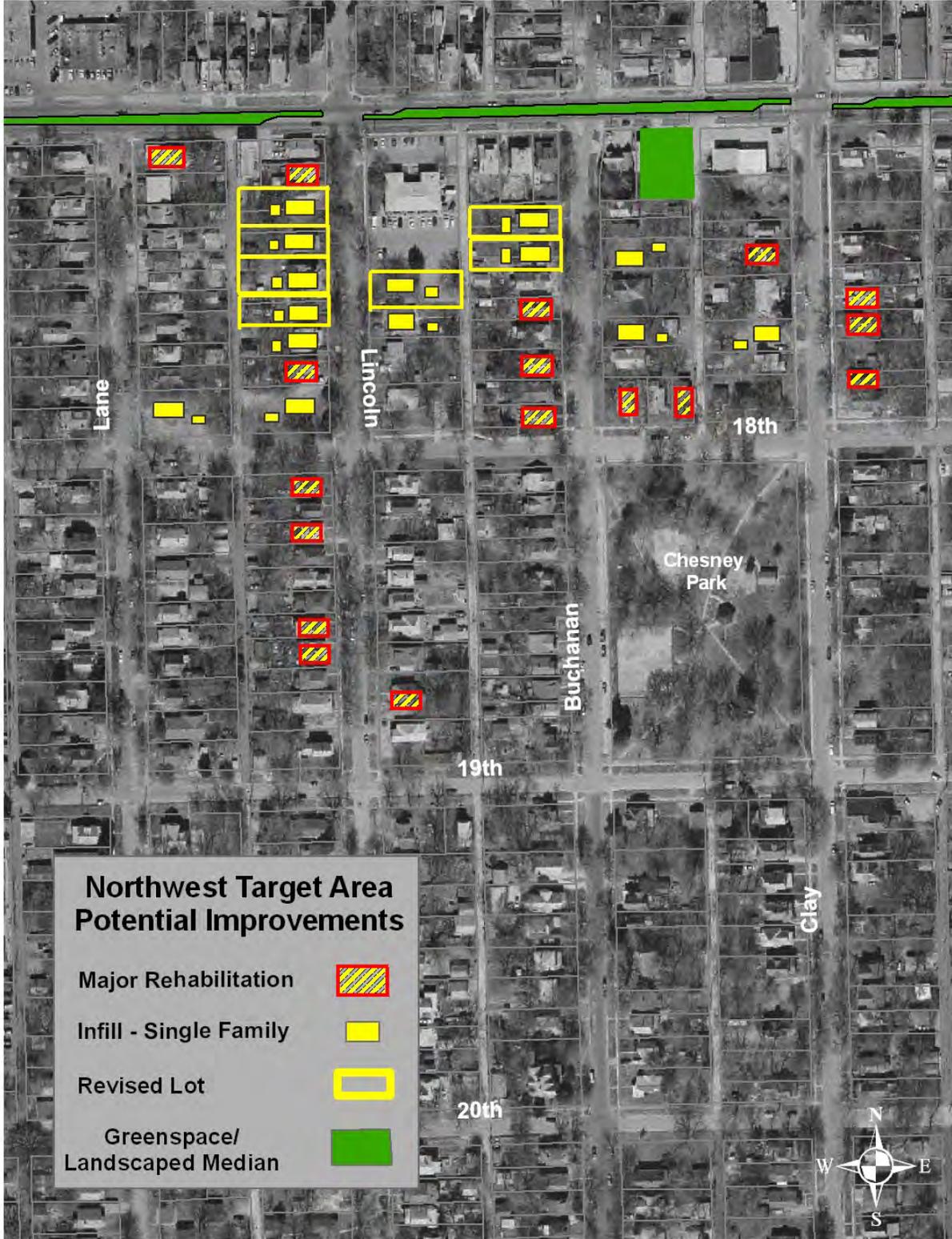
## Appendix B

Chesney Park Neighborhood- Clay Street 17th-21st							
Primary & Secondary Target Area 2010 & 2011	ESTIMATES			PRIORITIES			
	Costs	YEAR 2010	YEAR 2011	YEAR 2012	1-5 Years	6-10 Years	11+ Years
<b>Housing</b>							
Major Rehab (5 units 2010; 7 units 2011)	\$ 175,000	\$ 245,000					
Minor Rehab (7 units 2010; 8 units 2011)	\$ 84,000	\$ 96,000					
Acquisition & Demolition (2 units)	\$ 85,000						
Single-Family Infill (3 units)				\$ 300,000			
<b>Sub-Total</b>	<b>\$ 344,000</b>	<b>\$ 341,000</b>		<b>\$ 300,000</b>			
<b>Infrastructure</b>							
<b>Curbs &amp; Gutters</b>							
Clay St. (4,000 ft.)	\$ 140,000						
<b>Sidewalks</b>							
Hampton to 21st St. (500 ft.)	\$ 20,000						
<b>Alleys</b>							
17th to 21st St.	\$ 400,000						
<b>Mill &amp; Overlay</b>							
Between Clay and Central Park - 17th to 21 St.	\$ 100,000						
<b>Projects Sub-Total</b>	<b>\$ 660,000</b>	<b>\$ -</b>					
Design, Inspection, Contingency	\$ 201,300	\$ -					
<b>Sub-Total</b>	<b>\$ 861,300</b>						
<b>Total (estimate) Per Year</b>	<b>\$ 1,205,300</b>	<b>\$ 341,000</b>	<b>\$ 300,000</b>				
			<b>GRAND TOTAL</b>	<b>\$1,846,300</b>			
<b>Additional Priorities</b>							
3 Westar @ \$10.50/month electricity, free installation							
8 Decorative lighting requires general fund for utility costs; Use CIP for pole, light and installation							
Removal of Several Trees in ROW Park Forestry & Inmate crews							
Historic Street Signs							
<b>Assumptions</b>							
Curb & Gutter (1 block, both sides) = \$35,000							
Sidewalks (1 block, 1 side) = \$20,000							
Alleys w/sewer = \$80,000 per block; w/o sewer = \$60,000							
Average Major Rehab = \$35,000/unit							
Average Minor Rehab = \$12,000/unit							
Average Acquisition = \$35,000/unit							
Average Demolition = \$6,500-\$9,200/unit							
Detached Single-Family Infill = \$100,000/unit							
Mill & Overlay (new asphalt layering)= \$7.50/square yard; average street 600 ft. in length, 24 ft. wide							

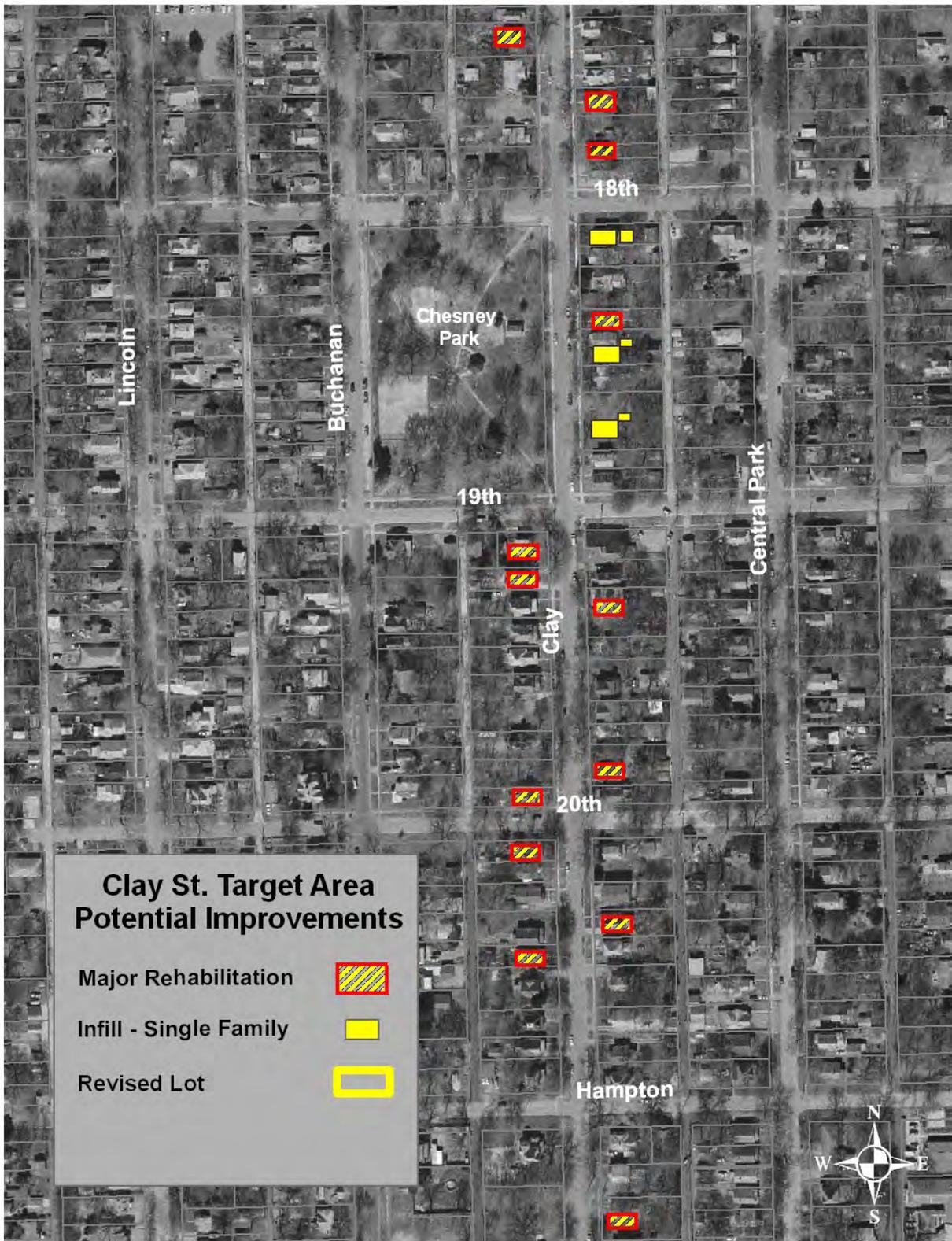
### Important Note:

These cost estimates provided for information purposes only and should not be relied on for future costs or as actual bids for future projects. Increases in materials, overhead and labor can change drastically in a short period of time. Funding is subject to availability, as provided by the federal government and City governing body and allocations change annually.

# Appendix C



# Appendix D



## Appendix E

### Chesney Park Infrastructure Concept Map



Lines Represent  
Areas in Most  
Need of Repair

—  
Sidewalk

—  
Alley

## Appendix F

### Criteria Used to Evaluate Structural Defects

**Minor Defects** – deficiencies corrected during the course of regular maintenance.

- Missing shrubbery or bare spots on lawn, trash and garbage accumulation
- Deteriorated or lacking window screens.
- Weathered paint, minor painting needed.
- Wear on or light damage to steps, window and door sills, frames and porches.
- Weathering of mortar and small amounts of loose, missing material between bricks.
- Cracked window panes, loose putty.
- Handrails deteriorated or missing.
- Missing splash blocks at foot of down spouts.
- Lacking porch lights.

**Intermediate Defects** – deficiencies serious enough to require more extensive repair than required by regular maintenance.

- Gutters or drain spouts rotten or parts missing.
- Sagging, cracked, rotted or missing roofing, overhang or lattice work.
- Foundation or bearing walls cracked or sagging or with loose, missing material.
- Erosion of landscape due to improper drainage, abandoned vehicle, cracked or uneven sidewalks.
- Deteriorated fencing with loose or missing material.
- Rotted, cracked or sagging porches, columns, door frames and stairways.
- Cracked or missing material from chimney.
- Broken or missing window panes and/or rotted window sills.
- Peeling or cracked paint, complete paint job needed.
- Damaged or missing air vents in foundation.

**Major Defects** – condition of structural components which can be corrected only by major repairs.

- Holes, open cracks, rotted or missing material in foundations, walls, roofing, porches, columns, etc.
- Sagging or leaning of any portion of house indicating insufficient load bearing capacity: foundation, walls, porches, chimneys.
- Defective conditions caused by storms, fires, floods or land settlements.
- Inadequate or poor quality material used in permanent construction.
- Inadequate conversion for use involved.

- Major deteriorated or dilapidated out building or garage.
- Evidence of a lack of, or inadequate indoor plumbing such as no roof vents.

**Category**

**Definition**

**Buildings/Properties**

***Minor Deficiencies  
(Sound)***

No major defects and no more than 1 intermediate defect and less than 5 minor defects. (3 points)

***Intermediate Deficiencies***

No major defects with 2 or more intermediate defects; no major defects with 1 intermediate defect and 5 or more minor defects. (2 points)

***Major Deficiencies***

1 to 4 (5+ is dilapidated) major defects in combination with intermediate or minor defects. (1 point)

**Blocks**

**Sound**

Average 3.0 – 2.5 points per block

***Minor Deterioration***

Average 2.49 – 2.0 points per block

***Intermediate Deterioration***

Average 1.99 – 1.5 points per block

***Major Deterioration***

Average less than 1.5 points per block



# Appendix G

## ChesneyPark Addresses

